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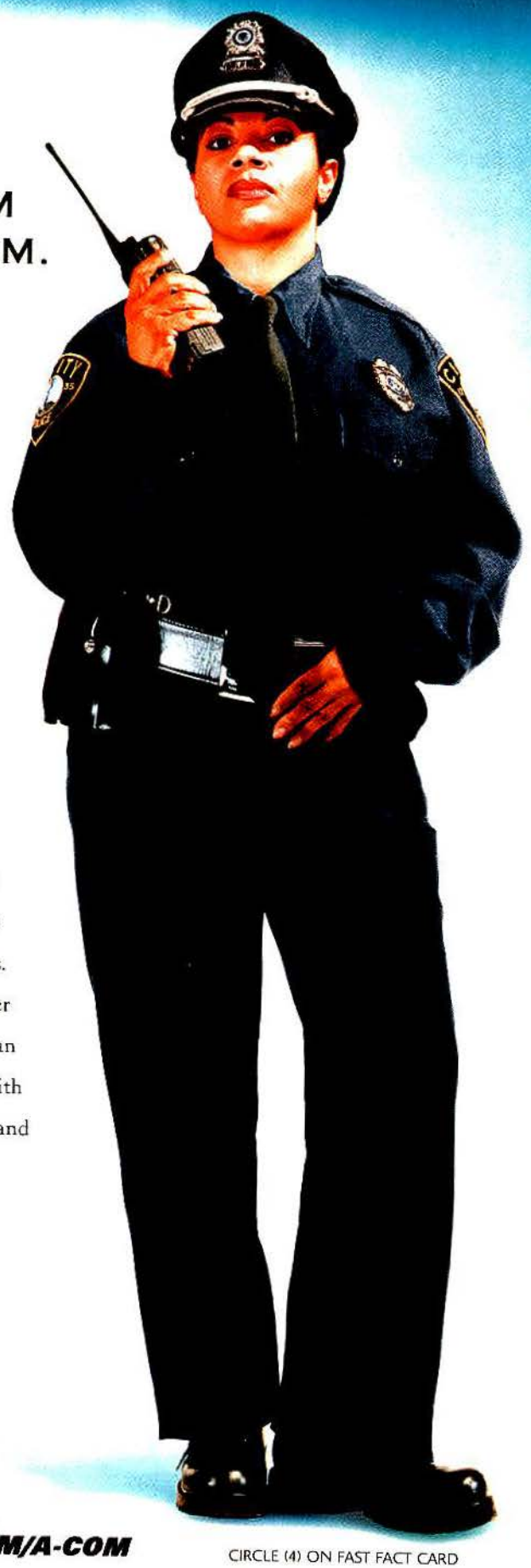

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CIRCLE (4) ON FAST FACT CARD

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MOBILE RADIO TECHNOLOGY
APRIL 2002
Volume 20, Issue 4

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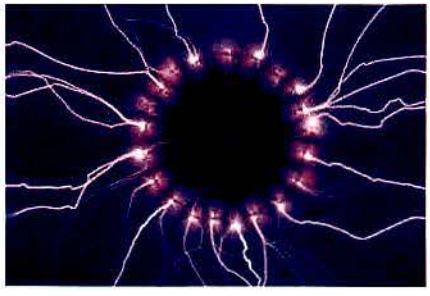

A reliable, well-engineered grounding system can help eliminate potential harm from lightning strikes. See page 46.

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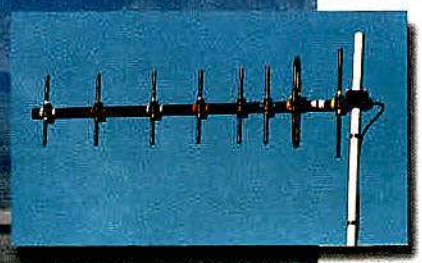

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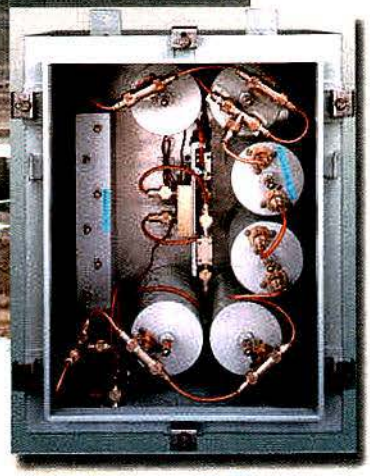

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Want to know what to do about the "FCC Notice of Proposed Rulemaking in The Matter of Improving Public Safety Communications in the 800MHz Band and Consolidating the 900MHz Industrial/Land Transportation and Business Pool Channels"?

Ignore it.

Yes, ignore it.

But only if you're in a special class of radio users called, "Public Safety—Ready Now."

We're talking about the FCC proceeding that considers proposals made by Nextel Communications, the National Association of Manufacturers and MRFAC (formerly called the Manufacturers Radio Frequency Advisory Committee). Those proposals would reallocate radio spectrum in a way intended to mitigate interference from commercial mobile radio service systems that use low-elevation, low-power base stations with digital modulation in a cellular architecture for frequency reuse.

Most of the interference complaints come from public safety agencies using radio systems configured with high-elevation, high-power base stations with analog modulation for economical coverage with comparatively few sites—sometimes with simulcast. Some analog CMRS, B&I/LT and other digital system operators also receive interference.

Interference complaints from agencies in as many as 28 states have been linked to Nextel's 800MHz digital enhanced specialized mobile radio operations. When Nextel's digital ESMR base stations transmit, communications with mobile and portable public safety radios in the immediate vicinity may become garbled or blocked.

Nextel submitted a far-reaching proposal that would require public safety agencies using 800MHz to change frequencies as would Nextel. Moving to opposite ends of the 800MHz band, the two incompatible types of radio systems could operate with less, if any, interference—except perhaps near the frequency boundary between them.

The FCC has stated that 1,320 public safety licensees would have

to change their operating frequencies. An additional 2,100 B&I/LT licensees would have to change frequencies, along with 1,100 SMR licensees. These figures apply to the Nextel proposal. Significantly fewer licensees would have to change frequencies under the NAM proposal.

Not everyone has spoken. You and anyone else can tell the FCC what you think about the Nextel or NAM proposals. You can answer the FCC's questions and submit your own ideas. The deadline for sending your comments is 30 days after the *Federal Register* publishes the FCC's notice. As of early April, the clock had not yet started.

Various trade associations and large private system operators are refining a proposal resembling NAM's that would move system frequencies here and there within the 800MHz band. Such a plan would avoid the need for moving 800MHz systems to frequencies in the 700MHz and 900MHz as Nextel's plan would require. Such a change would involve multiple complexities including gigantic equipment change-out costs, incumbent TV stations in the 700MHz band and channel bandwidths in the 900MHz band.

You can get a preliminary look at the various proposals along with the FCC's Notice on the Industrial Telecommunications Association Web site at **www.ita-relay.com**. Click on "Nextel 800MHz Band Proposal Updates."

What does all this have to do with ignoring the notice?

If your public safety agency has plans in the works for upgrading its system and using 800MHz frequencies to do it, go ahead.

Look what's happening to system operators who are putting off decisions until frequency refarming of the VHF and UHF bands is completed. They're still waiting.

Look what's happening to system operators who are delaying decisions until frequencies in the 700MHz band become available. In many geographic areas where channels for public safety communications are needed most, they have to wait until incumbent TV stations vacate the frequencies. They may be waiting a long, long time.

If your expenditure isn't excessive, your need is immediate and your timetable for construction is relatively short, you should obtain your 800MHz licenses and build or expand your system. You'll be getting life out of your new system while other agencies allow a wait-and-see attitude to consume years of valuable time.

You have to be careful about public dollars you spend, that's certain. At the same time, you have an obligation to the first responders on the street.

If you're ready now, go ahead with your 800MHz project.

Ignore the notice.

Don Bishop

Editorial Director
dbishop@primediabusiness.com

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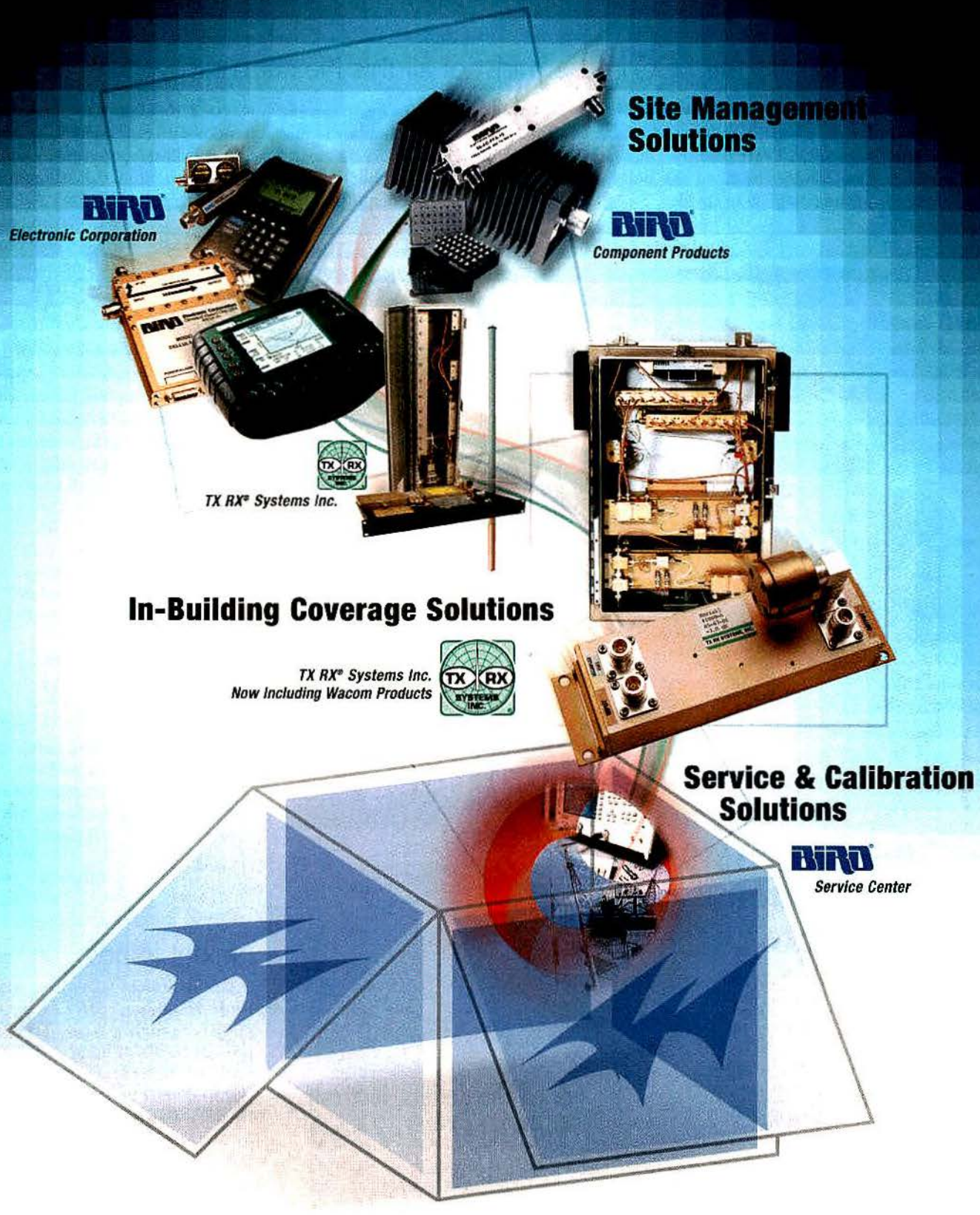

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CIRCLE (6) ON FAST FACT CARD

'Where is the FCC in the midst of all this Nextel controversy?'

I congratulate *MRT* on its continued dissection of the Nextel shenanigans. The February 2002 edition totally "knocked the ball out of the park," so to speak.

Anyone with half a brain can see that Nextel's 800MHz plan is just what it appears to be: a scam to get more bandwidth, higher market value and culpable deniability for Nextel's atrocious and illegal interference with public safety and business wireless operations.

Throughout all this, though, one must ask the question "Where is the FCC's dreaded Enforcement Division?" Is the era of Michael Powell one of "turn the other cheek," or "turn a blind eye?" Is it reminiscent of Clinton's nefarious "Don't ask, don't tell?"

The FCC will be the first to jump on shortwave "pirate" radio stations, non-compliant ham radio operators or CB'ers and punish through equipment confiscation and heavy fines. Yet, where is the FCC in the midst of all this Nextel controversy? Have they been bought off by Nextel kick backs? What happened to the unwritten rule of "He/she who causes interference must fix the problem?"

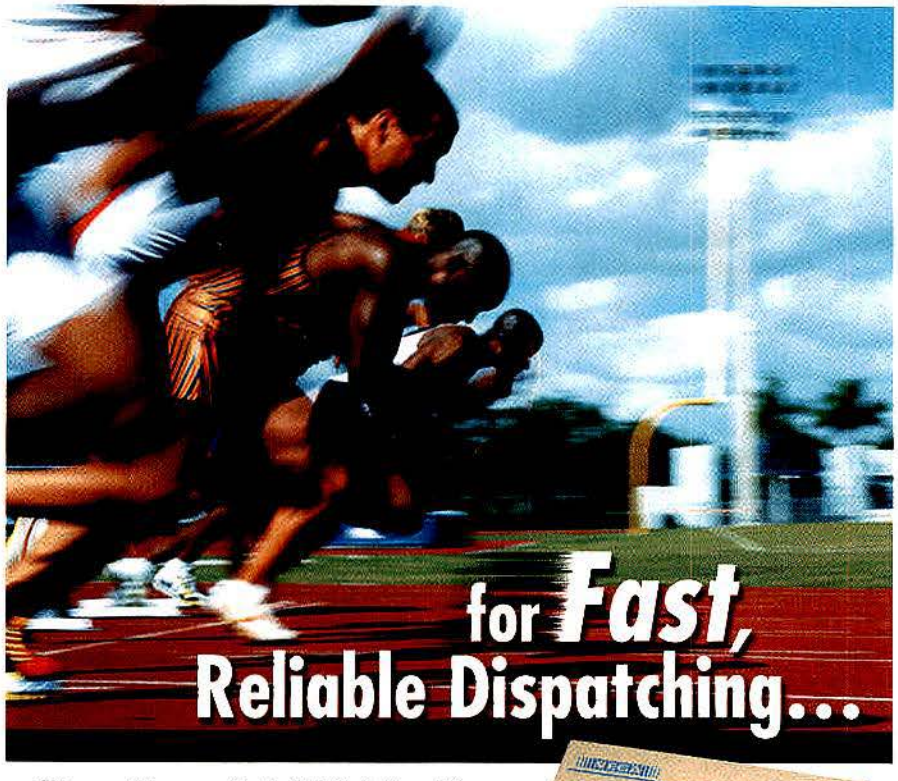
"Where's the beef," or the FCC for that matter?

The FCC needs to start doing its job, or else admit to the public that it is truly a "paper tiger."

Chairman Powell, it is "put up or shut up" time. Either step up to the plate or go home and eat cookies with your Nextel playmates.

Keep up the great work, *MRT*.

—D. Loren Fields, N1UMF
Augusta, Maine



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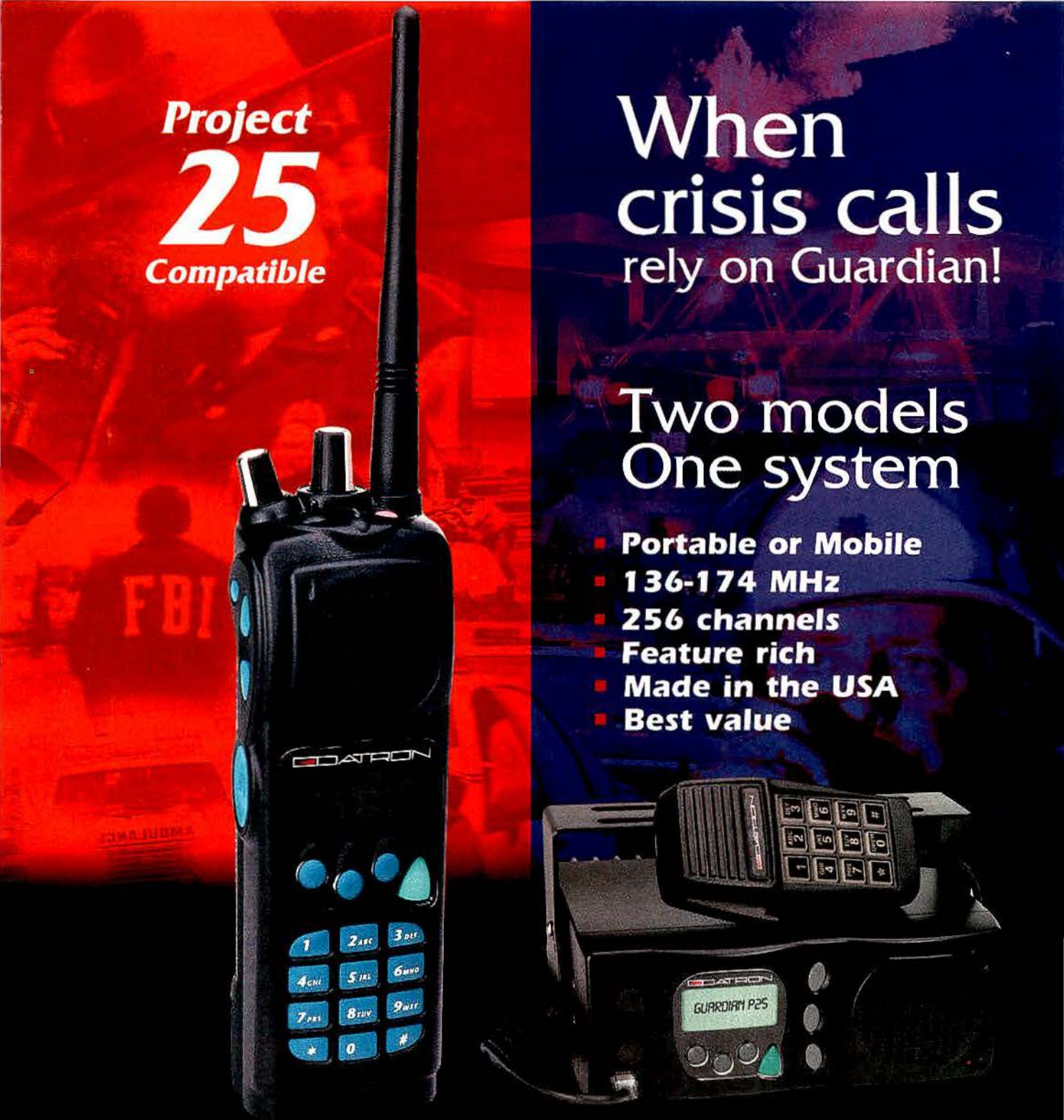
Nextel issues

Great article ("Dealing with a Rude Neighbor," *MRT*, February 2002) covering the past and present issues at hand with Nextel and its dedicated, well-known Form 600/601 printing press. Does Nextel's IDEN system, developed by Motorola, stand for Nextel "Interference Denying Every Neighbor" of reliable communications? Great reading.

—David W. Moriarty
Project Manager-Communications Systems
HNTB



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The fear of flying

I have never been afraid of flying before. But I haven't flown since Sept. 11. You may think that I am afraid of terrorism (I am), but the fear that I must face now is airport security.

The International Wireless Communications Expo is usually my first trip of the year. In making travel arrangements this year, it hit me that I will have to go through the increased security—for good reason. But it still scares me.

I don't have anything to hide. It's just that I've heard stories of people having to take off their shoes and empty their bags and go through pat-downs. But that probably *is* the best way right now to prevent further incidents on planes.

It could be better, though. By increasing efficiency in airport security operations, flying can be safer. How do we do that? Through better communications, of course.

Aiports have always used radio communications, from portables to pagers. New technologies and products are on the horizon, however, that will affect the efficiency of security, thus increasing passenger convenience.

We have to be careful, though. We could go too far, increasing passenger *inconvenience*. Biometrics, the digital analysis of biological characteristics such as facial features, irises or fingerprints, could consume time and space in airports (according to aviation experts). And there's always the privacy issue. Although when it comes to getting on a plane, I don't know that we have much privacy as it is. I'm sure terrorists would love more privacy.

Other solutions are coming down the pike, though. Aether Systems is testing its software at Boston's Logan International Airport. Massachusetts state troopers are carrying Blackberries equipped with software such as Aether's PocketBlue. It allows officers patrolling the airport's parking lots to check license plates and track taxi drivers' registration. The officers also randomly talk with passengers, using the devices to check the National Crime Information Center for outstanding warrants.

ARINC and Motorola have launched a nationwide dispatch system at Newark International, Miami International and Los Angeles International. The system combines IDEN with ARINC's communications networks. A baggage handler on one coast can speak to a customer service representative on another coast at the push of a button. The service is supposed to lead to increased operating efficiency and reduced turntime at the gates. The handsets used in the system combine a digital wireless phone with Internet access, text messaging, two-way radio and data access.

We all know that radio improves efficiency and safety in any job. Airports must make passenger safety their first priority while weighing the importance of convenience and smooth operations. After all, people can choose not to fly.

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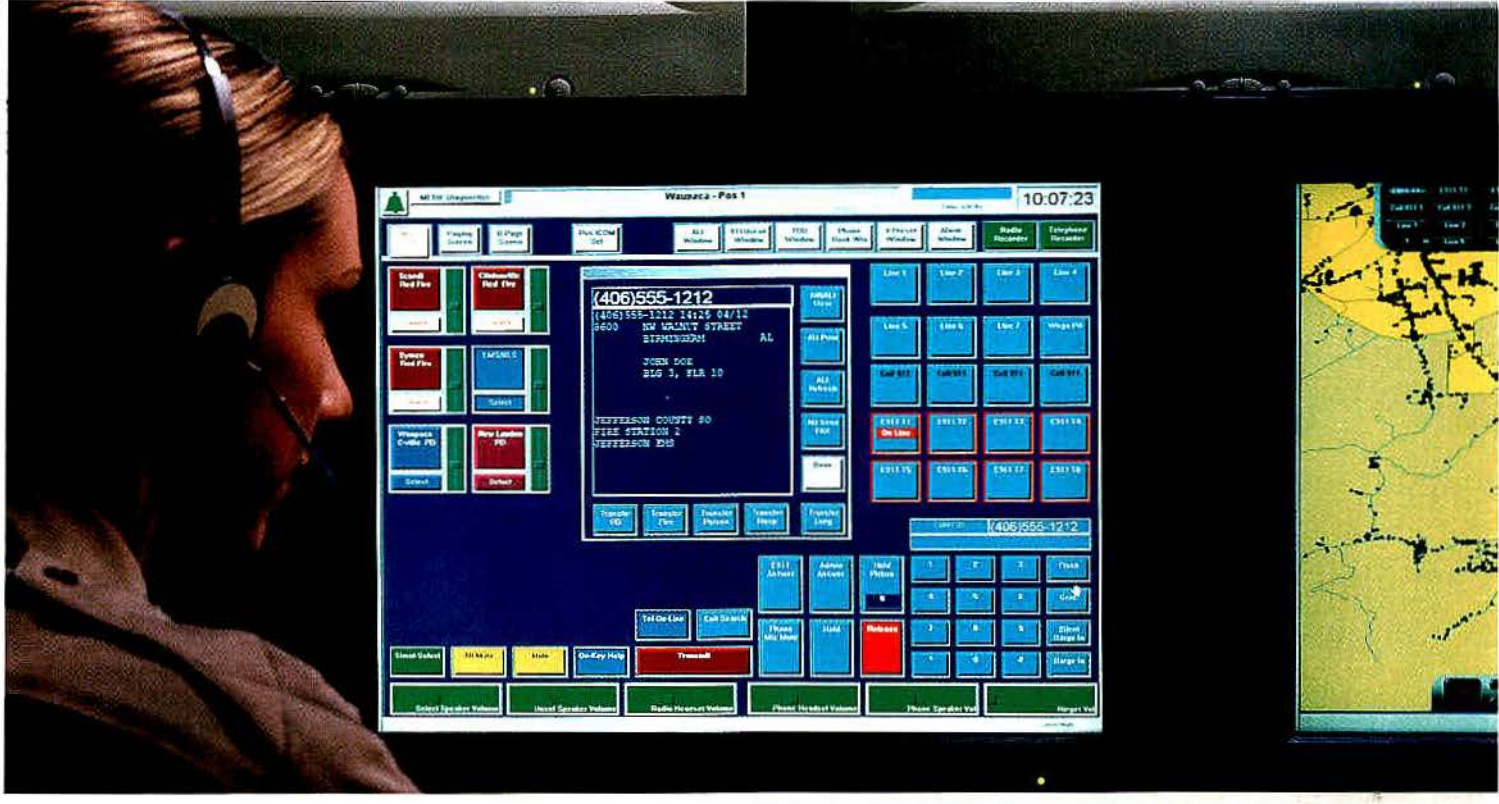

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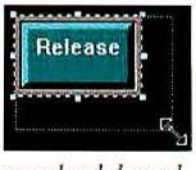

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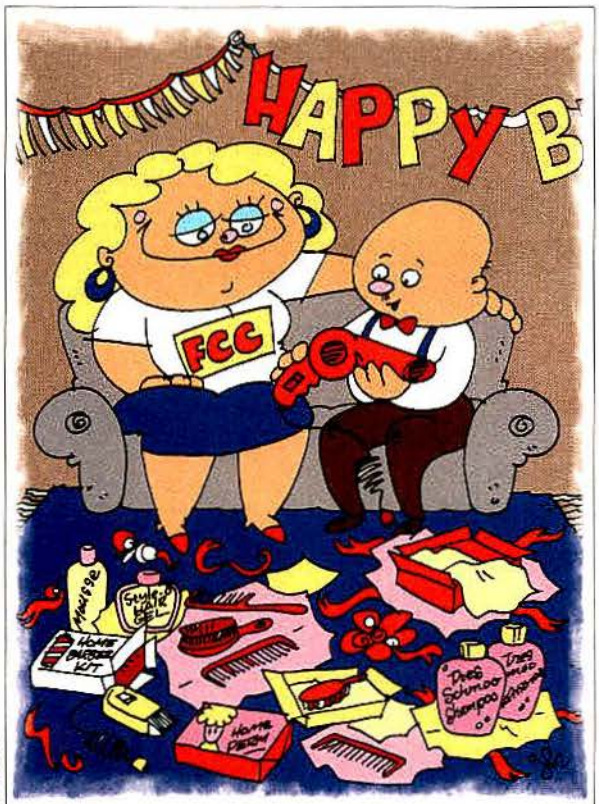
Let's hear it for the broads

By Robert H. Schwaninger Jr.

Over the past month or so the FCC has been spending all of its time talking about broadband. Encouraging the deployment of broadband services to the marketplace, whether by wire or flying through the air, is one of the commission's greatest concerns.



"Why, thank you, Dear... It's just what I needed!"

Illustration by John Hayes

In fact, on Valentine's Day, a day that is revered by females and dreaded by all males, the FCC delivered hearts to all of the broad services it could find by releasing three public notices—all dealing with its efforts to press for broader, wider and ultrawider services across the nation.

The first notice gave 50MHz of spectrum in the 4.940GHz–4.990GHz band to public safety. According to the commission's public notice, this spectrum will support new broadband applications such as high-speed digital technologies and wireless local area networks. So, with a little help from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration and a nod from adjacent-channel U.S. Navy operations, public safety just got more spectrum than the PCS operators. Bet you didn't give your honey a $20 billion box of candy.

But because public safety is still the sweetheart of every politician from Rudy Guilliani to Kathleen Abernathy, there's more. Tossed into the collection on the corner was another radio service dubbed ultra-wideband. The FCC launched its efforts to bring to the market unlicensed radio devices with nearly unlimited bandwidth, to be used primarily as imaging devices.

Under Part 15 of the agency's rules, public safety will now be armed with RF devices that can see through walls—like those magic glasses they advertise in the back of comic books. The FCC's rules would allow operation below 960MHz and in the 3.1GHz–10.6GHz band for devices that would "see" below ground or into a wall. Mind you, if you want to see *through* the wall then you can also use the 1.99GHz–3.1GHz band.

But there's still more. The ultra-wide band use also includes medical imaging systems that can employ the 3.1GHz–10.6GHz band. We recommend that these systems not be used on male patients standing against a wall, to avoid the term "stud" being misused in a medical diagnosis. We further caution against use of these imaging systems for determination of alcohol content because the term "plastered" might be misconstrued.

Ultra-wideband services will also include surveillance systems that will construct a stationary field of RF energy at 1.99GHz–910.6GHz to detect disturbances in the force, like vehicle radar systems that will tell you immediately before you back into that cherry-red Miata, and high-speed networking systems for LAN operations.

Forget OSHA. If it's broadband, you can radiate your home, office, walls, ground, car, body and any darn thing you want. And don't try hiding. This stuff goes through walls, rooftops and even caves.

Not to stop there, the FCC tossed bouquets to the wired wideband wonks as well. The FCC announced its proceeding to promote widespread deployment of high-speed Internet access services to "encourage the ubiquitous availability of broadband access to the Internet to all Americans." The promotion of broadband includes a roster of things the FCC won't do.

In a particularly telling fashion, the commission decided that the best way for it to encourage the delivery of high-speed Internet service was to not regulate it. By passing no rules, laws or policies, the agency believes that it is doing its part to promote the development of high-speed services ... er ... components.

You see, the FCC decided in a split decision that high-speed Internet ... um, whatever ... er, fa-

Schwaninger, *MRT's* regulatory consultant, is the principal in the law firm of Schwaninger & Associates, Washington, which is counsel to Small Business in Telecommunications. Schwaninger is also a fellow of the Radio Club of America. His email address is *rschwaninger@sa-lawyers.net*.

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CIRCLE (11) ON FAST FACT CARD

cilities are "information services" and not "telecommunications services," despite having "telecommunications services" delivered over information services facilities. Therefore, the agency did not need to regulate these facilities the way they regulate telecommunications services. The agency did leave open the question of whether these providers need to contribute to the Universal Service Fund, (whatever they're doing).

The FCC's efforts to co-opt the slogan "wider is better" from the car manufacturers leaves open a vital question that even Verizon, SBC and Bell South can't answer: "Where's the money coming from to pay for this?"

Although I applaud the FCC's gift to public safety in delivering 50MHz of spectrum in the 4.9GHz band and launching the availability of devices that can actually see through walls so I can spy on my secretary to see if she's filing my work or her nails, the cost of the equipment is likely to be beyond the reach of many of the agencies that might consider using these devices.

As for high-speed Internet service, the commission needs to read the business section of the newspaper rather than the ex parte submissions of the broadband carriers. As reported in almost every business publication, the problem isn't regulation; it's consumer resistance to the high cost of the service. When given a choice between dial-up at about $10 a month and high-speed DSL or cable at $50 a month, consumers have silently said, "Keep the high-speed stuff. I need to use that 40 bucks to pay for the rising [unregulated] cost of cable television."

So, customers are opting for HBO over DSL. All of the deregulation of high-speed Internet services cannot change this basic buying decision. The only thing high-speed Internet providers can do to alter customers' choices is to lower the price. But right now the FCC isn't looking at price tags. It's just adding to the broad inventory of available services. ■

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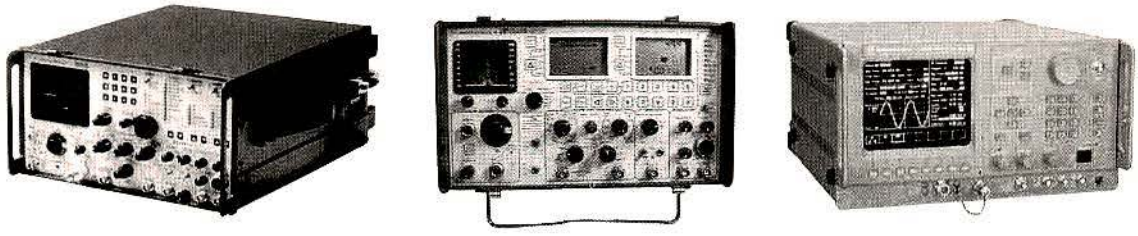

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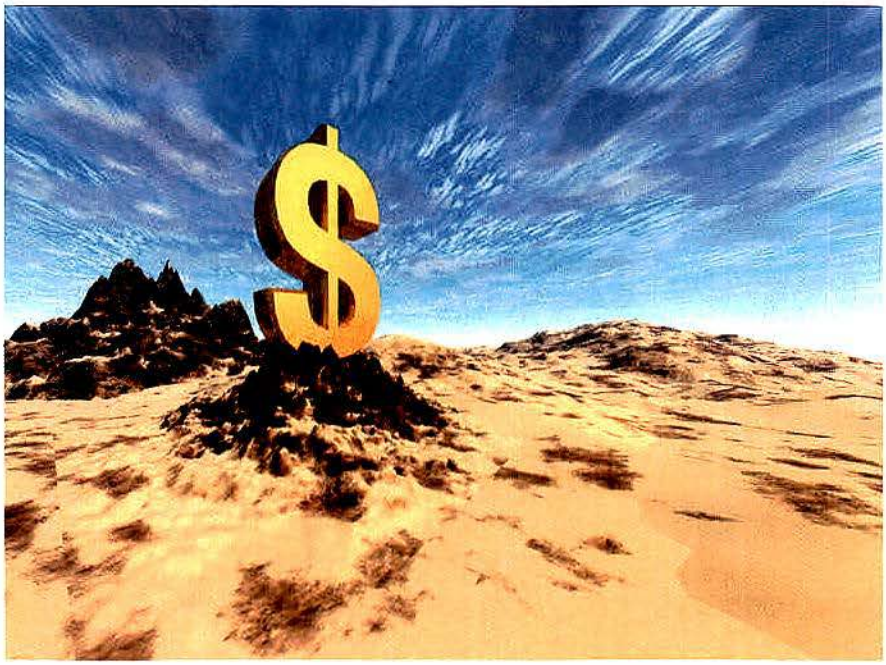
CIRCLE (12) ON FAST FACT CARD

Communications cutbacks

Monetary setbacks mean we have to be creative.

By David O. Dunford

Hard times and hard choices are upon us. From my perspective, even though the newspapers report the recession has ended, it looks like more and more agencies are spending less and less money on radio communications.



The state of Kansas, long known for fiscal responsibility (or simply tightfistedness) is warily eyeing a $680 million shortfall in the budget year beginning in July (just three months away). With the full momentum of the "trickle down" theory in operation, it's only a matter of time before counties and cities are faced with spending cutbacks. These cutbacks are serious to lawmakers, but not like the real financial problems in the private sector where cutbacks equal job losses.

In a typical city government (technically a "municipal corporation"), employee retention and staffing levels are virtual fixtures. When bonded indebtedness approaches a submultiple of assessed valuation, the city's ability to issue bonds (borrow money, buy radios) diminishes. But seldom is anyone let go because if things get really bad, tax increases are an option. All this is predicated on growth in population and assessed valuation, i.e. economic development.

Compare this to a private-sector radio shop that faces upward spiraling health-care costs for a small employee pool, a more rapidly evolving (at least changing) customer base and aged receivables so far out they appear to be at the vanishing point. We must not forget the curious nature of Radioman and the attendant costs of his ongoing care and training. Throw in a serving of deregulated telco costs and the de facto competition to land mobile from the various 2.78935G wireless providers, and it's a miracle that shop owners and system managers keep, as my mother says of her retirement community friends, "their own teeth, their own hair or their own money."

What to do?

What's a fellow to do? Well, we can't keep doing "more with less" as in the past. It looks to me like we'll do "less with less" because the power of positive thinking eventually ends at the doorstep of the Fair Labor Standards Act office or with the Worker's Compensation ad law judge. So if local government is so strapped, what options realistically present themselves for radio communications providers and operators?

We know that price is a consideration, so "it" must be realistically affordable in context of both service and reliability suited to the local jurisdiction. "It" could be priced as a recurring cost service or service-like capital replacement system because of the poor prospects for raising a big lump of money. In the past, "it" was specifically forbidden to be part of any service or system offered to the public. Contemporary wisdom leads us to readily see several advantages to having "it," in some fashion, being strategically attached to a system shared in some form.

"It" isn't a unique product or killer application as wireless entrepreneur firms hope to discover. "It" still comprises its original components of persistence, local commitment and adaptive thinking. I'm still looking for "it." ■

Dunford, *MRT's* public safety consultant, is technical services consultant for the Lenexa, KS, Police Department. He is a member of the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials–International. You can email Dunford at *mrt@primediabusiness.com*.

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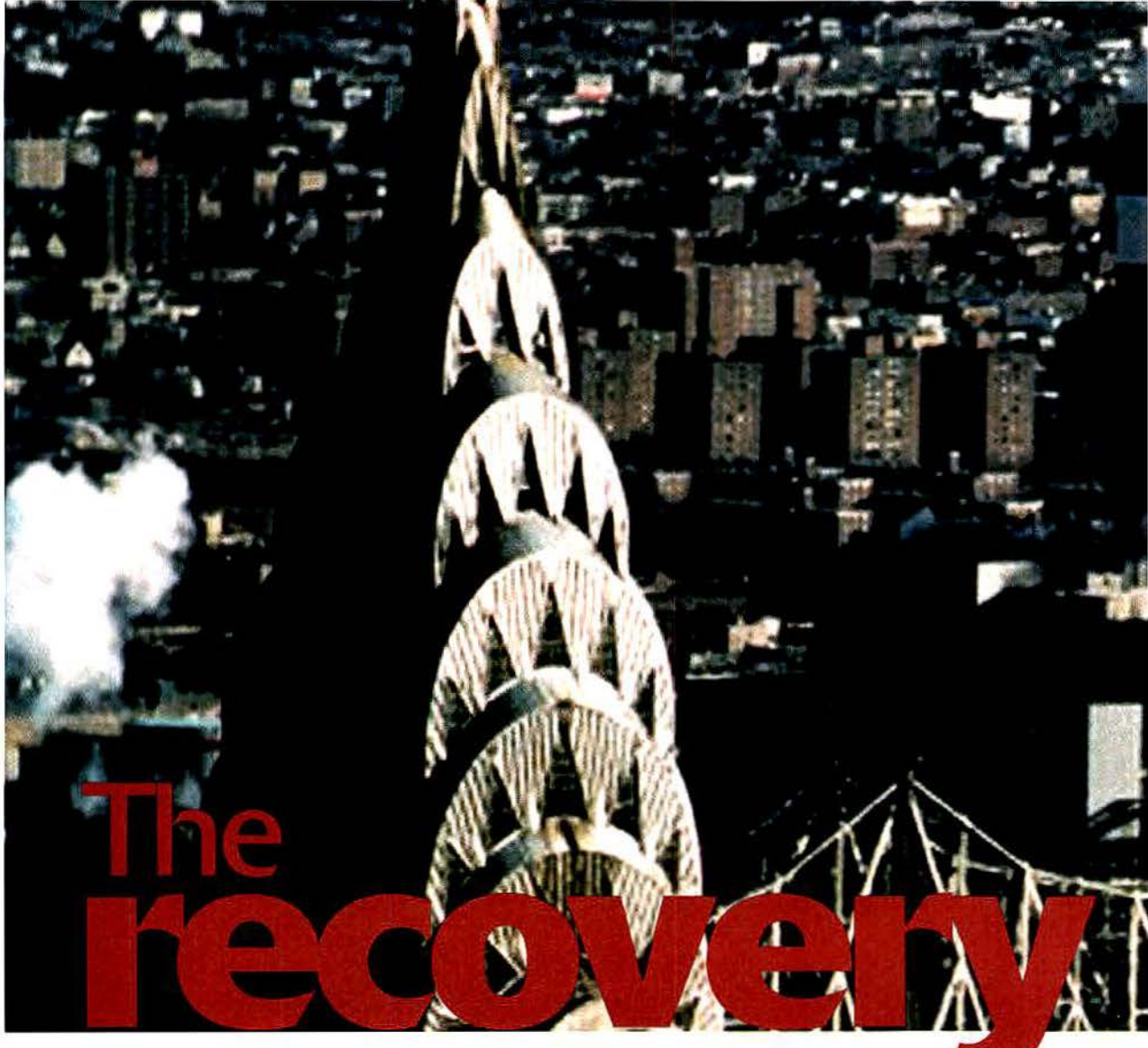

The recovery

By James Careless

When the Twin Towers collapsed on Sept. 11, New York lost what was arguably the best antenna sites in North America.

At 1,368 feet above street level, 1 WTC (the North Tower) was the tallest building on the eastern seaboard. This is why its 207-square-foot rooftop was dotted with antennas at five-foot intervals. At 1,362 feet, 2 WTC's rooftop was also home to several antenna sites, including the New York State Police's primary transmitter site for its Metro-21 800MHz EDACS trunking system. So the loss of the Twin Towers was a serious blow to public safety operators.

Before Sept. 11, communications site provider Pinnacle Towers was responsible for managing 1 WTC's 42 non-broadcast client antennas. "We covered public safety networks, paging firms, cab companies—the works," said Pinnacle Towers spokesman Joe Furmanek. Even high-level, "confidential" federal law enforcement agencies had sites there, according to Furmanek.

What was lost

So how have New York's public safety networks recovered from the loss of the Twin Towers? Details are sketchy because government officials are reluctant to comment.

When the World Trade Center Towers fell, so did the primary site for the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey's 800MHz Ericsson EDACS trunking system. Also coming down were one of the New York Police Department's 470MHz repeaters, plus two-way 400MHz Motorola systems used by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency, as well as the Immigration and Naturalization Service. In addition, the New Jersey Highway Patrol lost an 800MHz trunking system that covered two-thirds of New Jersey.

Pinnacle Towers scrambled to return its 1 WTC clients to the air. "Within 20 minutes of the North Tower collapsing, our staff started compiling alternative sites for our clients," said Michael Millard,

Careless is a freelance telecommunications writer based in Ottawa, ON, Canada. His email address is *james@tjtdesign.com*.

continues

After losing crucial antenna sites when the towers fell, some New York public safety networks have continued to operate through site replacements and substitutions.

Pinnacle's vice president of engineering and operations. Pinnacle had two alternative sites to offer: the 687-foot Chemical Bank Building at 277 Park Ave. and the 656-foot Alliance Building at 1345 6th Ave. Although "nowhere near as tall as the WTC was," Millard said, these two properties still gave the area some degree of coverage.

Within hours, Pinnacle located its clients by phone and email and directed them to its alternative sites. "We also called the landlords of both buildings—we only manage their rooftops; we don't own them—and advised them to give anyone with the proper government identification access to their rooftops," Millard recalls. "We didn't worry about paperwork; we just told our clients to get their antennas up as fast as they could, and we'd deal with the details later."

Subcarrier Communications, which also had antennas on the World Trade Center, provided alternative sites, too.

Today, the recovery continues

"What we've been doing is redesigning and re-engineering Manhattan to provide coverage patterns similar to what was destroyed," said John Paleski, Subcarrier's president. "Needless to say, it takes more than one building to replace the WTC site. In fact, in some cases, we've had to use as many as five."

For security reasons, Paleski would not reveal which Subcarrier buildings were providing replacement coverage. However, he said that the sites were chosen and configured using RadioSoft propagation mapping software.

"We took our existing managed rooftops, plugged them into the WTC's RF model, and then saw which properties we had that could help replace the lost coverage," Paleski said. "In some cases, we then had to modify our towers to fill the bill; either by adding steel supports or upgrading their power, telephone or electrical supplies."

This brings us to the tricky part:

Above: The New York State Police coped with the loss of radio networks at the New York World Trade Center by moving some of its radio operations into the Chrysler Building.

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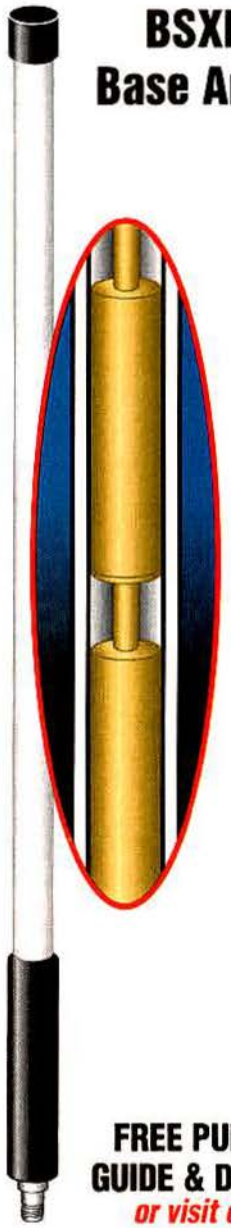

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CIRCLE (14) ON FAST FACT CARD

Communications at the Pentagon

The Public Safety Wireless Network has released an analysis of how successfully public safety communications worked at the Pentagon on Sept. 11. The report, released in February and called "Answering the Call: Communications Lessons Learned from the Pentagon Attack," includes steps public safety agencies across the country can take to improve their radio communications.

"The Pentagon incident demonstrates in a very public way how critically important communications capabilities are for public safety agencies," said Robert E. Lee Jr., PSWN Program Manager. "Imagine the challenge of 50 different local, state and federal public safety agencies responding at the Pentagon—900 different radio users operating on multiple radio systems, and attempting to communicate with one another."

Surprisingly, the report found that the because of "mutual-aid" agreements, the majority of local public safety responders at the scene experienced little difficulty establishing interoperable communications during the initial response. Most of the first responders had Arlington County's radio frequencies preprogrammed into their portable radio equipment and had frequently used the capability for other mutual-aid responses.

The problem of interoperability arose as increased state and federal agencies arrived to help. No means of direct radio communication was immediately available to these secondary responders.

The PSWN report made the following recommendations for public safety agencies to enhance communications interoperability when responding to major or minor incidents:

1. Develop regional and statewide communications systems.
2. Establish mutual aid agreements and standard operating procedures not only between local agencies but also between state and federal agencies.
3. Employ the Incident Command System to enhance communications efforts in emergency response situations.
4. Conduct mass casualty and disaster response training drills to identify existing capabilities and potential shortfalls.
5. Conduct communications asset inventory to identify tools and their capabilities.
6. Adhere to common technology standards in the design, procurement and implementation of future public safety communications systems.

trying to say definitively where each of New York's public safety networks stands today.

When the World Trade Center collapsed, the NYPD lost a 470MHz repeater. Since then, the police department has compensated by adding boosters to its other repeaters and by adding repeaters at other locations, said NYPD spokeswoman Carmen Melindez.

Meanwhile, the Fire Department of New York had lost a repeater on 7 WTC.

"We lost the repeater after the 47-story 7 WTC, which was damaged by debris and caught fire," said Peter Gorman, president of the Uniformed Fire Officers Association. The loss of this repeater seriously compromised service to firefighters using 15-year-old Motorola hand-helds within the WTC site, he added. This, in turn, may have resulted in some FDNY personnel not hearing the order to evacuate, and thus losing their lives when 1 WTC fell.

In addition, a source with the FDNY said that two phone lines

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CIRCLE 059 ON FAST FACT CARD

Sept. 11: Amateur radio's badge of honor

The events of Sept. 11 have been well-documented in the media including *Mobile Radio Technology* (November 2001). There were heroes to be sure, but one group of heroes that has received little, if any, attention are the amateur radio operators.

Within a matter of hours, at both the New York World Trade Center and the Pentagon, amateur radio operators were on scene to provide communications to law enforcement and rescue agencies, the American Red Cross and the Salvation Army.

The Pentagon

After the attack on the Pentagon, the American Radio Relay League, a national association of amateur radio enthusiasts, received a request for assistance from the Salvation Army. But before the request was made, the ARRL's Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES) was already in action. Tom Gregory, ARRL Virginia Section Emergency Coordinator, helped to direct and coordinate the support effort at the Pentagon. "Early on, it was not clear what the extent of the damage to the Pentagon was," he said. "But even before we had an understanding of what the Salvation Army needed, I contacted a number of volunteers to get them ready to move to the site with their equipment."

Within five hours of the attack, the volunteers were packing up their personal radio equipment and heading for the Pentagon. They arrived the evening of Sept. 11, and emotions ran high when they saw the extent of the damage. "When we got there we saw a gaping hole in the building. It was gut-wrenching," Gregory said. "I couldn't even talk when I first got there and saw what happened. The first couple of days, all the amateur radio volunteers had the same reaction."

Gregory said that volunteers internalized their emotions as best they could. "No one felt very good," he said. "Everyone was very frustrated. But after the first couple of days, people got some form of emotional satisfaction in helping the rescue effort. For me, it was a form of striking back."

The volunteers overcame a number of obstacles when supporting the Salvation Army and the Red Cross. First was determining the amount of effort it was going to take. Starting off with only five or six amateur radio operators operating a few hours a day, the ARRL eventually expanded to operating 24 hours a day. Radio operators worked from what were called "mobile canteens." Their primary focus was logistics support. When the Salvation Army or Red Cross ran out of an item, they notified the radio operator who worked with the headquarters of the Salvation Army and Red Cross.

Gregory observed rescue team members coming to the canteens hot, tired and dirty. He saw what the amateur radio effort did to support the rescuers. "It was very emotional for me to watch the trucks roll up," Gregory said. "As one was about three-quarters empty, the next truck pulled up." The trucks carried everything from food and drink to towels, clean socks and shirts." Gregory watched as trucks carrying bags of ice would pull up and empty. "The trucks just kept coming. It was amazing."

The rescue teams faced an incredible challenge, but so did the amateur radio operators. While all the radio equipment belonged to the amateurs, they didn't have everything they needed. "We needed someone with a portable radio with about 5W of power to communicate back to our base station. But when a volunteer left, he took his equipment with him," Gregory said. "This presented a problem until the people at Vertex Standard were kind enough to donate a Yaesu base station and hand-held radios." This donation enabled the radio operators to set up one station and to avoid having to change out the equipment.

But lack of equipment wasn't the only obstacle they faced. They faced an RF nightmare. "The amount of RF that was present at the Pentagon was unbelievable," Gregory said. "If you could see the RF, the place would have been glowing."

To overcome the noise floor, the volunteers realized they needed more power. An amateur radio group in Stanford, VA, packed up its repeater and brought it to the site. The repeater was set up at the Pentagon with a 35-foot antenna. This installation solved most of the amateurs' communications problems.

New York World Trade Center

"While we would like to think that all our practice and preparation would prepare us, nothing could have prepared us for what happened," said Charles Hargrove, ARRL New York City District Emergency Coordinator. "It was hard to prepare for something like this."

The New York City Office of Emergency Management (OEM), forced to move out of Building 7 at the WTC, used a bus. "They moved from corner to corner to corner as an event would happen, such as a fire," Hargrove said. This was the first opportunity for amateur radio to help. OEM needed phone lines for its command bus. Hargrove contacted the mobile command center and was told they needed five phone lines. He then contacted the telephone company, Verizon, and a technician was sent to "steal" phone lines to run out to different locations for OEM use.

Hargrove realized that the police and other agencies would be faced with monumental communications problems—starting with communications inside the first tower that was attacked. "The police and fire department knew the lines of communications were knocked out. They lost contact with their people above a certain point in the building due to [the destruction of] Radiax going up the building," Hargrove said. "You can tell from the radio broadcasts there was a lot of confusion." But then the second plane hit. "After the second plane hit, all heck broke loose."

Dispatchers found themselves inundated with calls for help and with warnings. "If you listen to the tapes of the police and fire activity you can hear the dispatchers trying to calm callers down so they could get a clearer picture of what was going on," Hargrove said.

In an effort to assist the authorities, Hargrove and his volunteers ran into a number of problems. "Communication with the OEM was poor," he said. "They moved twice and didn't tell us where they were going or how to contact them. This was very frustrating. I understand they get money from FEMA to support a RACES (Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service) station. We have not seen a penny of it." Unlike the ARRL's ARES, which provides communications to civilian organizations, RACES provides communications to local and state government agencies with funding from FEMA. Also, Hargrove notes that getting the IDs for volunteers that federal officials required was tough going.

One thing Hargrove did not have a problem with was getting volunteers. "During the two weeks we were active, we had more than 250 people from not only New York, but also Pennsylvania, New England and New Jersey," Hargrove said. "We even had a couple of guys from Canada and a guy from San Francisco who were in the area volunteering."

Technical problems in New York were not as big of an issue as they were for the amateur radio volunteers at the Pentagon. One reason was the infrastructure that New York City amateur radio operators had in place. "We often take old stuff, like old taxi cab systems, and make them work. The old stuff is easily fixed or replaced," Hargrove said. "We have repeaters all over the city—in houses, offices, anywhere we can get one placed. In fact, one club was given space on top of a hospital. They are all individually owned. Not one is owned by ARRL."

—Roger Lesser

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CIRCLE (16) ON FAST FACT CARD

Photo courtesy of M/A-Com Wireless Systems.

Scotty Birtell was one of ten M/A-Com technicians who tested and programmed the 500 radios needed to aid in rescue operations in New York.

were cut by the collapse, which also disrupted radio communications.

The New York State Police coped by moving some of its radio operations into the Chrysler Building. Using a five-channel 800MHz trunking system rushed to them by M/A-Com Wireless Systems, the NYSP connected four antennas and a combiner left over by previous tenants to get this replacement "up and running by the evening of the [Sept.] 12," said NYSP dispatcher Sergeant Bob Jones last fall. M/A-Com also supplied 200 M-RK handheld transceivers for the state police. Jones has been unavailable since then for further comment.

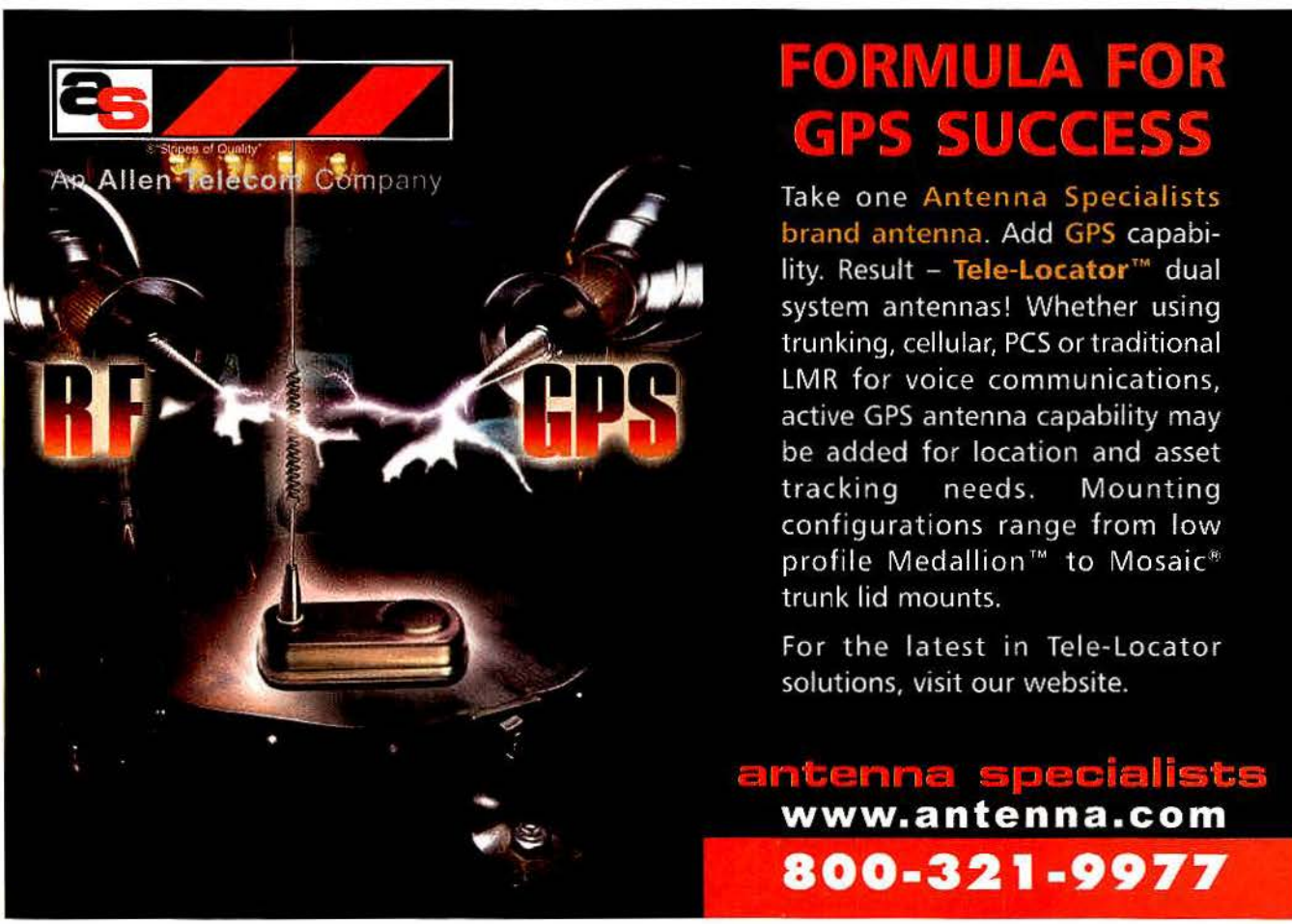
Finally, M/A-Com also helped the Port Authority set up a replacement command center in an unspecified location, using M/A-Com equipment shipped from Virginia. Together with the loan of 300 M/A-Com LPE hand-held transceivers, the replacement equipment restored the Port Authority's radio communications coverage within a day of the attack.

Even with the site replacements and substitutions that New York's rooftop managers provided, nothing fully replaces a 1,368-foot antenna site other than another 1,368-foot site.

What happens next

The trouble is, another 110-story structure is not likely to be built in New York. There would be too many bad memories associated with the previous colossal structure. Moreover, it could be impossible for most businesses to feel comfortable in a new WTC that might be an attractive target for terrorists.

Thus, the "temporary solutions" adopted by many NYC public safety networks may prove to be permanent. Whether the replacement facilities provide coverage as well as the World Trade Center did—or at least as well as is needed—will be revealed by the results of the next few months of use. ■



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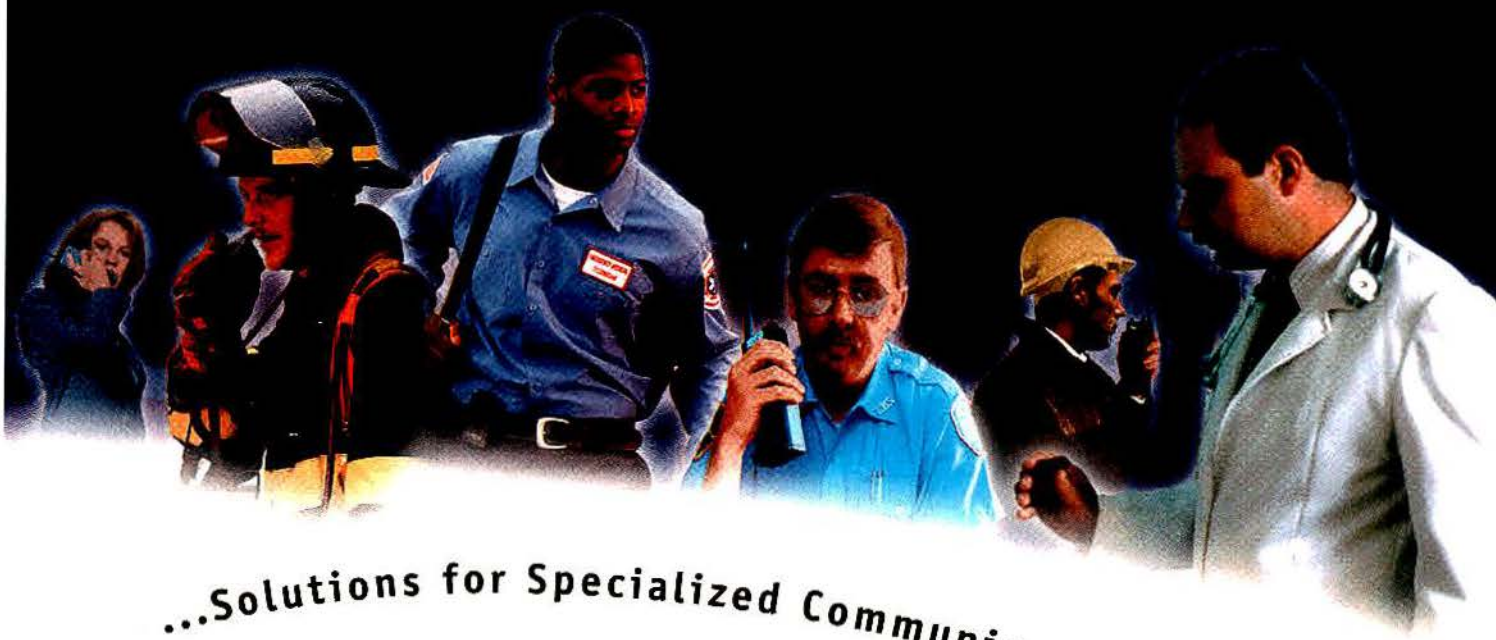

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Intermod: Getting the upper hand (Part 1)

By Harold Kinley

For those who haven't yet been initiated into the world of intermodulation interference, this will serve as a quick introduction, or it will simply serve as a basic review for the "old salts" who have been around for a while.

Intermodulation interference has always been a problem for those who work in the land mobile radio industry. In *channelized* communications systems, *odd-order* intermod products (resulting from *in-band* signals) will fall back into the same band.

Intermod can be predicted and calculated mathematically. There are many software applications ranging from commercial software to *shareware* and even *freeware*, that can be used to study the intermod phenomenon through mathematical analysis.

The requirements for the formation of an intermod signal are a non-linear mixing point and at least two signals (of different frequencies) applied to the non-linear mixer. The non-linear mixer can be the Class C RF amplifier output stage of a transmitter, an overloaded receiver input stage, a rusty point of a tower or a bad RF connector. In short, almost anything can become a non-linear mixer.

When dealing with large signal levels the mixer doesn't have to be highly efficient to produce an intermod signal of sufficient intensity to cause serious interference to an on-site receiver.

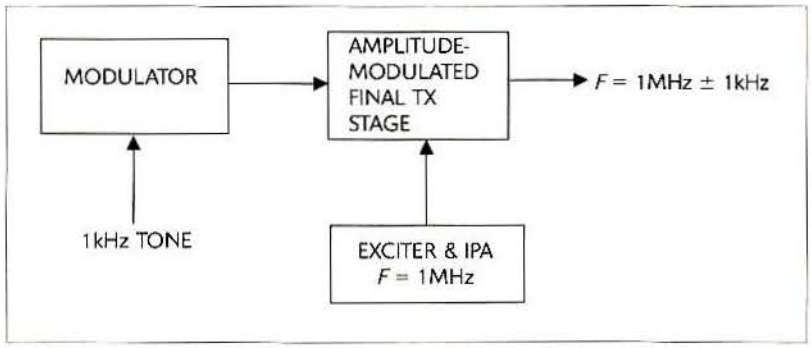

Figure 1. The intermodulation process in the modulated final stage of this AM transmitter from three signals at the output—the 1MHz carrier (F_c), F_c + 1kHz and F_c − 1kHz.

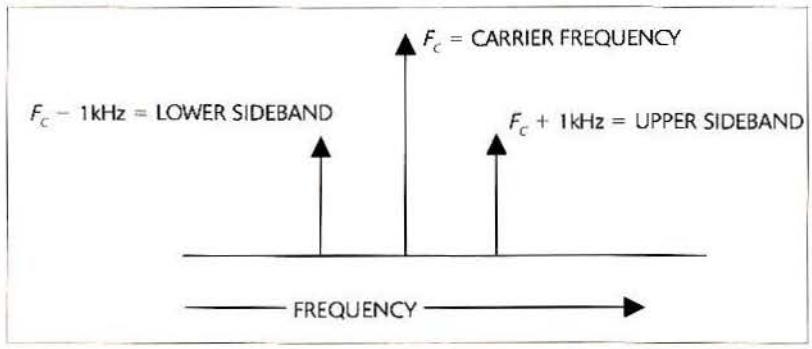

Figure 2. The process of amplitude modulating a carrier is produced by intermodulation. Here, the lower sideband is displaced below the carrier by a frequency separation equal to the frequency of the modulating tone. The upper sideband is displaced above the carrier by a frequency separation equal to the frequency of the modulating tone.

Figure 1 is a simple diagram of a plate-modulated AM transmitter. When a 1kHz sine-wave audio tone is applied to the input of the modulator, the signal is mixed with the RF carrier in the modulated stage to produce a sum and difference frequency of $F_c - F_a$ and $F_c + F_a$. If the carrier frequency is 1MHz (1,000kHz), then the difference frequency will be 999kHz and the sum frequency will be 1,001kHz.

Thus, the output from the transmitter will be the carrier frequency of 1,000kHz and the sum and difference frequencies (sidebands) would be spaced 1kHz above and below the carrier frequency. (See Figure 2.) These sidebands contain the *intelligence* of the signal and are the result of an intermodulation process.

Intermodulation occurs in a superheterodyne receiver where the local oscillator and RF signal are mixed to form an intermediate frequency. So, intermodulation isn't always a bad thing. Without intermodulation, our communications equipment wouldn't work. Yet, when *undesired* intermodulation occurs, it can cause our communications equipment to *not* work.

Odd-order intermod

Let's look at a channelized land mobile radio band where the channel spacing is 30kHz. (See Figure 3.) Here, seven frequencies are listed from a mobile radio band. Let's plug a couple of these frequencies into the third-order model: $2A - B$.

Contributing editor Kinley, *MRT's* technical consultant and a certified electronics technician, is regional communications manager, South Carolina Forestry Commission, Spartanburg, SC. He is the author of *Standard Radio Communications Manual, with Instrumentation and Testing Techniques*, which is available for direct purchase. Write to 204 Tanglewylde Drive, Spartanburg, SC 29301. His email address is *halkinley@charter.net*.

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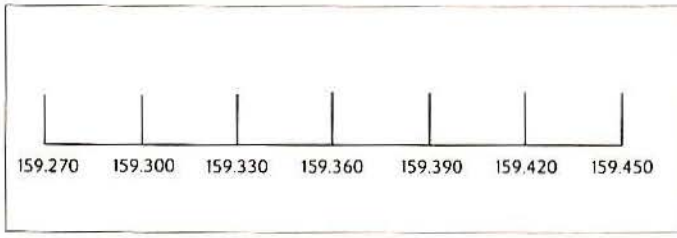

Figure 3. A few frequencies from a land mobile radio band are shown here. Odd-order intermod signals formed from any of these frequencies will fall back into the band. Even-order intermod signals formed from frequencies within this band will fall out of this band.

If we let A = 159.390MHz and B = 159.360MHz, then the resulting intermod frequency will be 159.420MHz. So, it falls right back into the band and will cause interference to a receiver on this frequency and near this site. This is called third-order intermod because the sum of the coefficients of the *mixed* frequencies is equal to 3.

Let's try a fifth-order product in the form of $3A - 2B$ where A is 159.330MHz and B is 159.300MHz. Then, $3(159.330) - 2(159.300) = 159.390$. Again, the odd-order intermod falls back into the same band where it was generated. The odd-order intermod products are the most troublesome in land mobile radio—especially those of the third order.

Even-order intermod

Even-order intermod caused by *in-band* frequencies will fall out of band. Referring again to Figure 3, let's plug a couple of these frequencies into the even-order model $A - B$—a second-order intermod signal. In this example, let A =159.450 and B = 159.300. The resulting intermod signal is 150kHz and falls far out of band. This results in no interference to any of the in-band channels.

The rule

The rule that says odd-order intermod products fall in-band while even-order intermod products fall out of band is true as long as the frequencies forming the intermod are in-band frequencies. If the frequencies are from different bands, this statement no longer holds true.

Next month we will look at practical examples of intermod and how they can be resolved by taking advantage of the "leverage" factor. Until next time—*stay tuned!* ■

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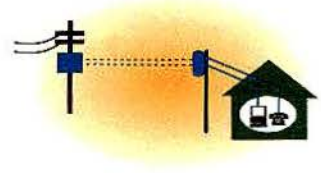
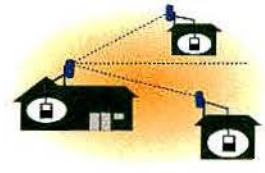


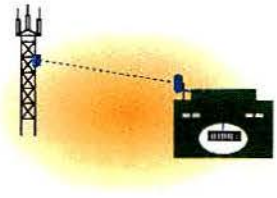
Ethernet Bridge

Connects to and extends existing WAN/LAN networks to other sites in excess of 8 miles line-of-sight distance.* Can also provide wireless broadband Internet and Internet telephony to remote clusters.



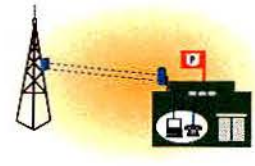
Fractional T1/E1

Transmits V.35 synchronous data for use as a line concentrator with multiplexed voice, or simply for extension of any private network, with data rates as high as 256 kbps! Uses only 2 watts, and costs less than the competition.



Leased Line Emulator

Establishes a dedicated analog connection between two sites within 14 miles line-of-sight distance.* Provides two full duplex, two-wire or four-wire lines.



**ranges can be extended using an optional external antenna.*

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- **Very low power draw. Accepts any voltage from 12 - 48 VDC.**
- **Easily solar powered.**
- **Optional external antenna increases range.**
- **Repeaters also available.**

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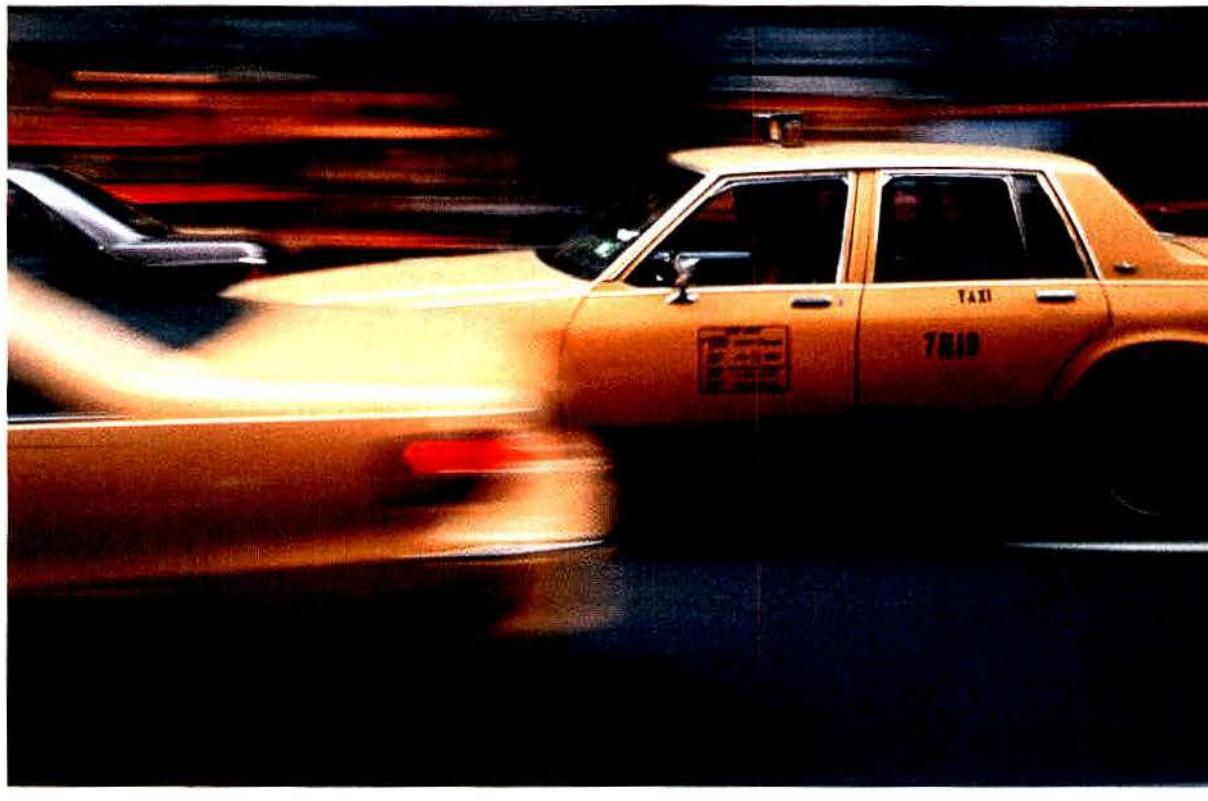
CIRCLE (21) ON FAST FACT CARD

Web-based dispatching for the bottom line

Combining dispatching with GPS offers business owners a powerful tool for managing fleet operations to bring down costs.

By Don Bishop



What do trucking companies, taxi companies, utilities, couriers, police departments, fire departments, ambulance services and parents with teenagers have in common? They want to know where their vehicles are.

Here's the difference, though: The vehicle location service has to be configured and priced just right for each kind of user.

For example, many trucks travel interstate on lengthy journeys. Dispatchers need to know where they are, but not every minute. Private radio systems don't have the necessary coverage, so satellite or cellular systems provide the mobile communications link.

The vehicle location service has to be configured and priced just right for each kind of user.

Taxis, utilities and couriers often have their own radio networks or buy airtime from service providers that can supply or carry vehicle location information. These customers often need more frequent updates that can run up the cost.

Police, fire and emergency medical services need real-time location information, and they need the reliability of their own dedicated network or a data allocation on a public network.

And parents? Well, as much as they might like to know where their teenagers have driven the family car at any given moment,

Bishop is editorial director. His email address is *dbishop@primediabusiness.com*.

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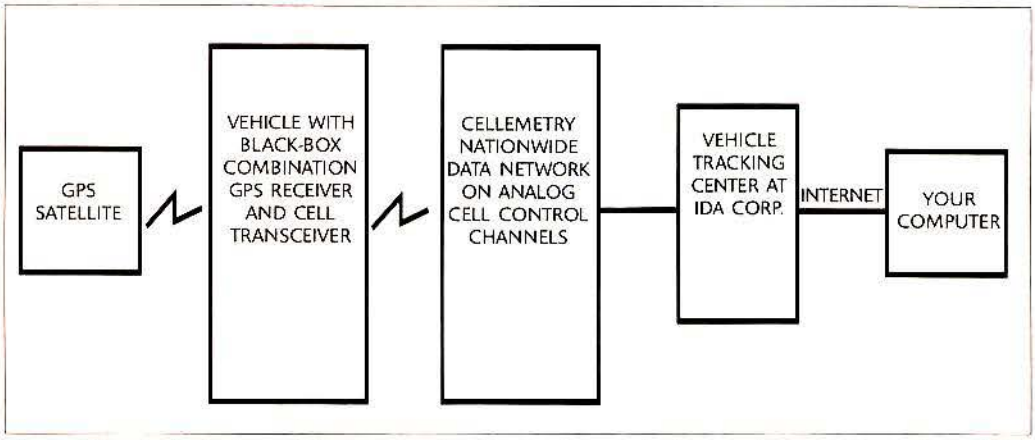

The tracking device in the vehicle captures locations and transmits data packets over the analog cellular network's control channel on the Cellemetry network to IDA's data tracking center. The information is accessed either by an Internet browser or Web-client software.

the cost may be too high. But it's relatively economical to feed location information into a vehicle-mounted recorder for daily or weekly review to see where a car has been.

A combination of GPS, cellular and Internet products offers Web-based vehicle location service for over-the-road trucking. The three technologies come together to bring the cost down compared to the satellite services that trucking companies have used for many years.

In the vehicle, a black-box unit that combines a GPS receiver with a transceiver designed to communicate on cellular system control channels sends the truck's position over cellular system control channels using an arrangement with cellular carriers fashioned by Atlanta-based Cellemetry, a subsidiary of Numerex.

Cellemetry's technology transmits short messages via the control channels of the AMPS cellular network. The AMPS cellular network has 790 analog voice channels and

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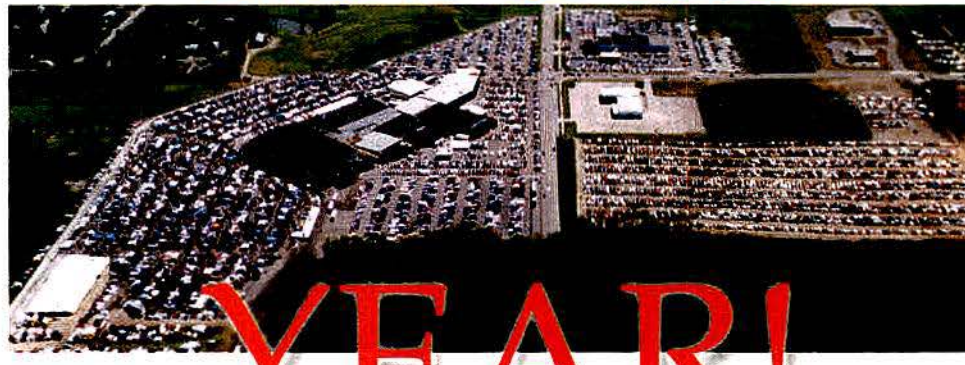

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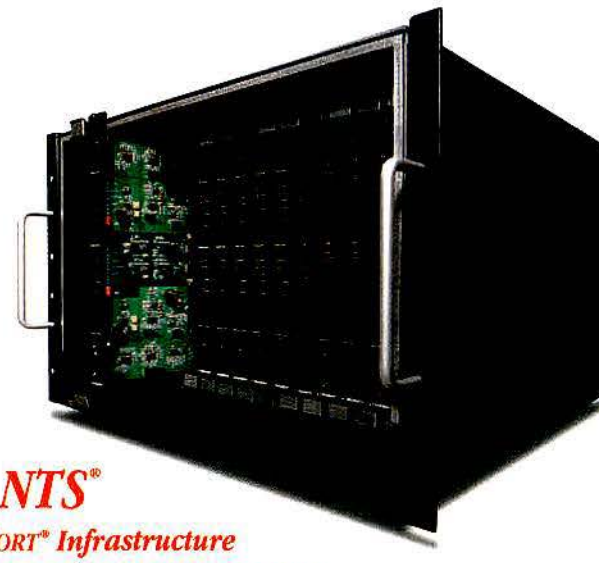

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CIRCLE (24) ON FAST FACT CARD

42 digital control channels. The control channels initiate cellphone calls. Once the call is initiated, the cellular system directs the telephone call to a voice channel.

The control channels are more robust than the voice channels for several reasons. First, the control channels are digital; the voice channels are analog. The control channels also operate at higher transmission power than the voice channels, giving better coverage. Finally, the cost of using the control channels is far less than the regular voice channels.

Vehicle-tracking software shows reported locations of multiple vehicles on the same digital map.

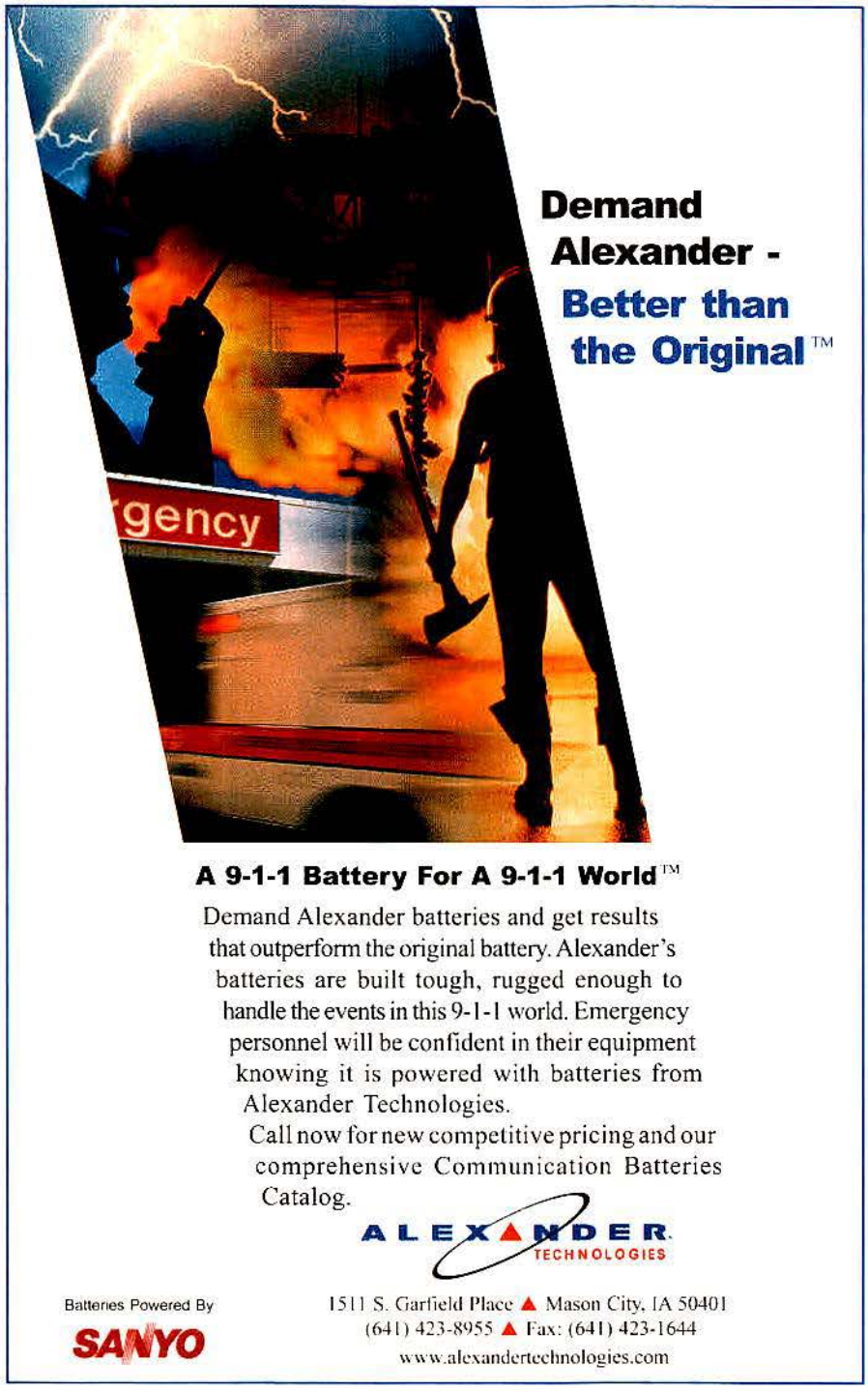
By using the cellular network, Cellemetry takes advantage of a proven technology used by millions of cellular users and available virtually everywhere. The analog cellular network is the biggest radio network in the world, and some 200 million packets of data are transmitted over the control channels every day in North America. This represents an average of only 10% of the maximum control channel capacity.

Cellemetry operations

The Cellemetry service operates in the same manner that roaming telephones operate in the cellular system. A roaming telephone is defined as a cellphone operating in any system other than its home system. When a cellphone is turned on outside of its home system, it sends its mobile identification number (MIN) and its electronic serial number (ESN) to the cellular system via one of the control channels.

Based on the cellphone number, the local cellular switch communicates with the "home system" of the roaming telephone. It uses the SS7 network that interconnects all cellular switches in North America to confirm that the user is allowed to use the system and which phone-calling features are available to that customer.

The Cellemetry radio, like a roaming cellphone, sends an ESN and MIN number over the SS7 network, but the MINs are specifically assigned so the MIN and ESN are routed to a Cellemetry service gateway that is also connected to the SS7 cellular network. The MIN serves to identify the Cellemetry



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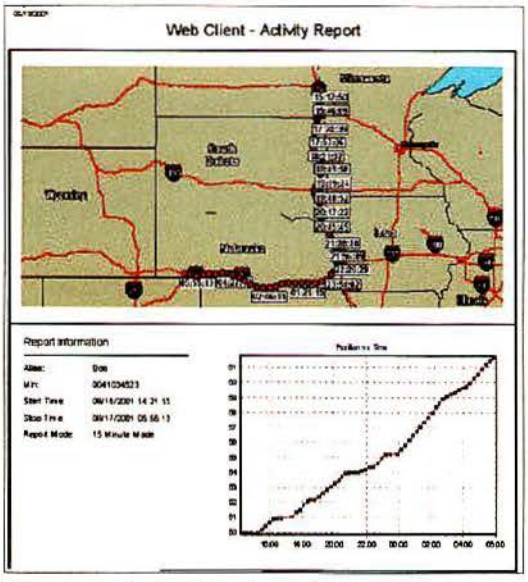

Monitor and direct fleet activity on maps that can be customized with user landmarks and detailed information.

radio, and the ESN is the data field that contains vehicle location information.

The vehicle location information travels from the Cellemetry service gateway to a server at IDA, the black box supplier and vehicle location service provider in Fargo, ND. IDA makes the location information available to the customer via Internet protocol.

The system can be configured to send location information automatically every 15 minutes or every hour, and it can be polled or "pinged" at will to request location information. But it takes three to five minutes for the location information to travel from the vehicle through the cellular network, Cellemetry's gateway, and IDA's server and over the Internet to the customer. That's adequate for trucking company purposes, but not for public safety agencies.

The black box hardware costs about $600 to $700 per vehicle installed. The software package for tracking vehicles with Web-based browser access is free. Cellemetry charges a $25 activation fee, and $20 per month pays for 12 location readings per day.

Service plans with more readings per day are available. Location readings every 15 minutes cost $50 per month, for example. Customers can "ping" a vehicle's location for $1 per query.

The computer screen displays a map indicating the vehicle's location during the periodic readings or queries.

IDA's nationwide location system is fairly new, and is mostly being installed in over-the-road trucks. The company's other AVL products are based on business-

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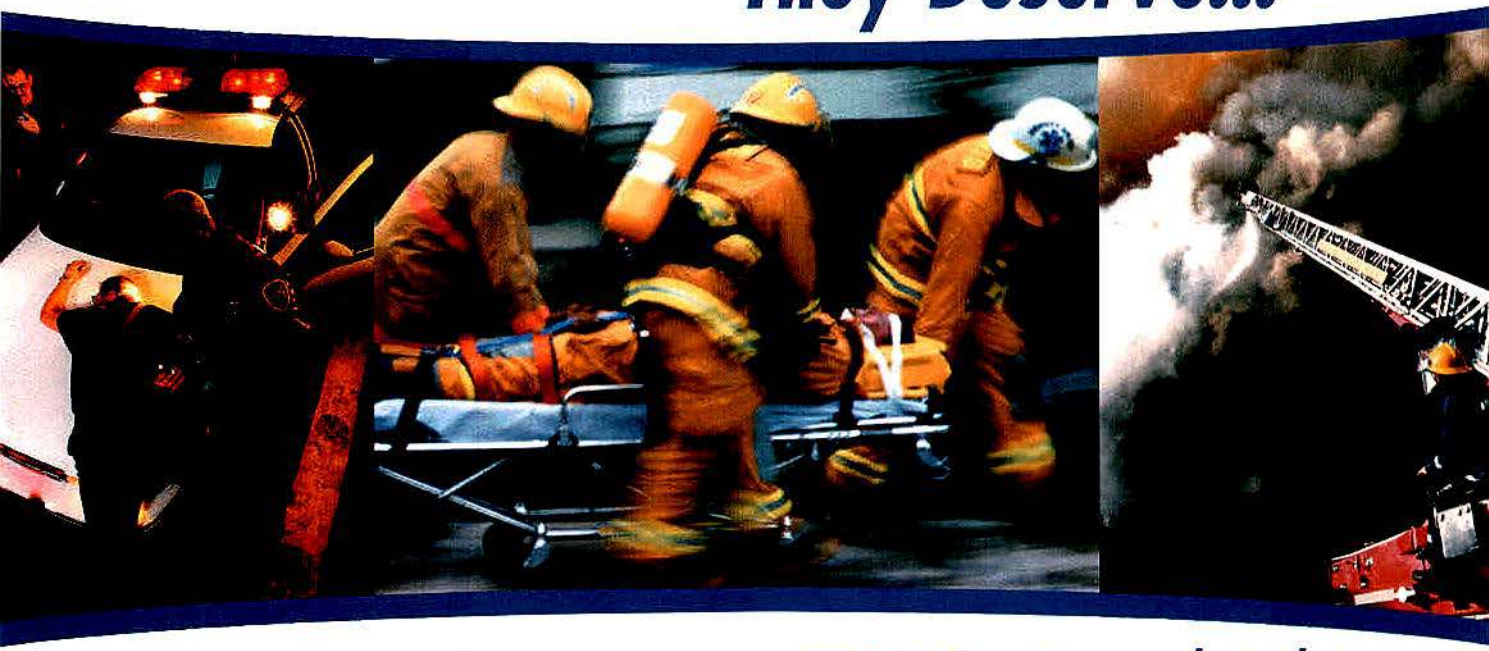

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band radio or public safety radio applications that are more regional in nature.

For applications that do not require location information from vehicles as they move about, a GPS system can be placed in a vehicle, and its location recordings can be downloaded periodically to run in a program on a computer. Even more readings might be taken in this way because the buffer can hold 1,200 records.

For locating vehicles during their travel, the black box installed in the vehicle contains a GPS receiver and a cellular unit. A short "rubber duck" type antenna serves the cellular transceiver, and a magnetic-mount antenna serves the GPS receiver.

Use a Web browser to see a vehicle icon positioned on a digital map with the street address.

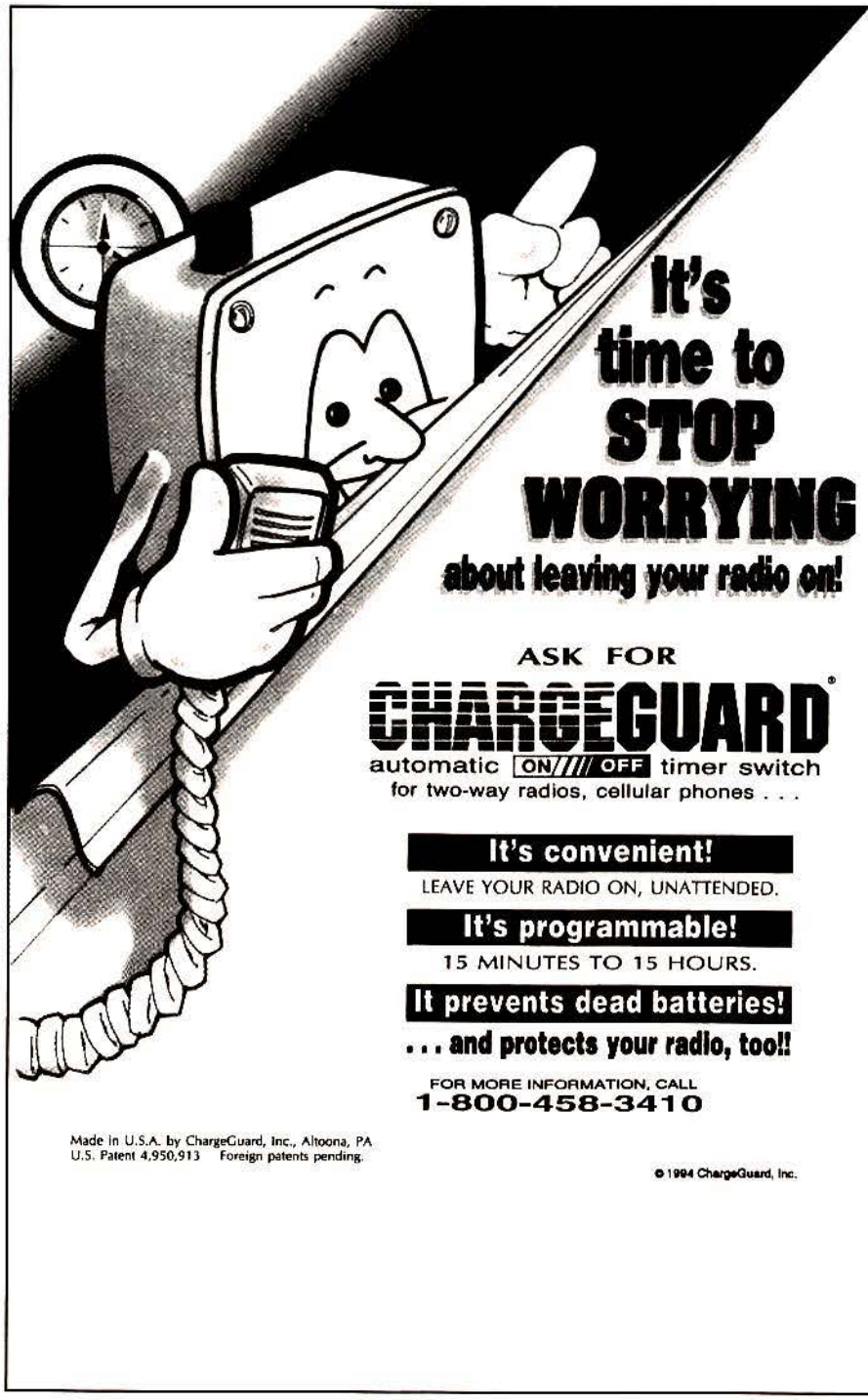
Although the GPS antenna has to have a good view of the sky, the box can often be mounted under the dash because the cellular antenna will receive through plastic and glass. If the box is mounted in the trunk or another inconspicuous position, the cellular antenna must be mounted outside the vehicle and connected to the box with a cable.

Public safety applications

A Web-based system of this type is not as popular with public safety users because location readings are delayed by a few minutes as the unit connects with the cellular network and the information travels across the Internet. When officers are involved in a high-speed chase, the dispatcher wants continuous and instantaneous position information. There is no way to provide that with Web-based software that has to route information through the Internet to IDA's server and from there to the customer's dispatching position.

Public safety agencies commonly use dedicated radio channels for mobile data. They purchase other equipment and software that allow them complete control of the AVL system.

But for delivery services that cover regional areas or a national footprint, no radio system other than cellular offers the necessary range. That's where Web-based AVL fits the bill for low-cost GPS dispatching. ■



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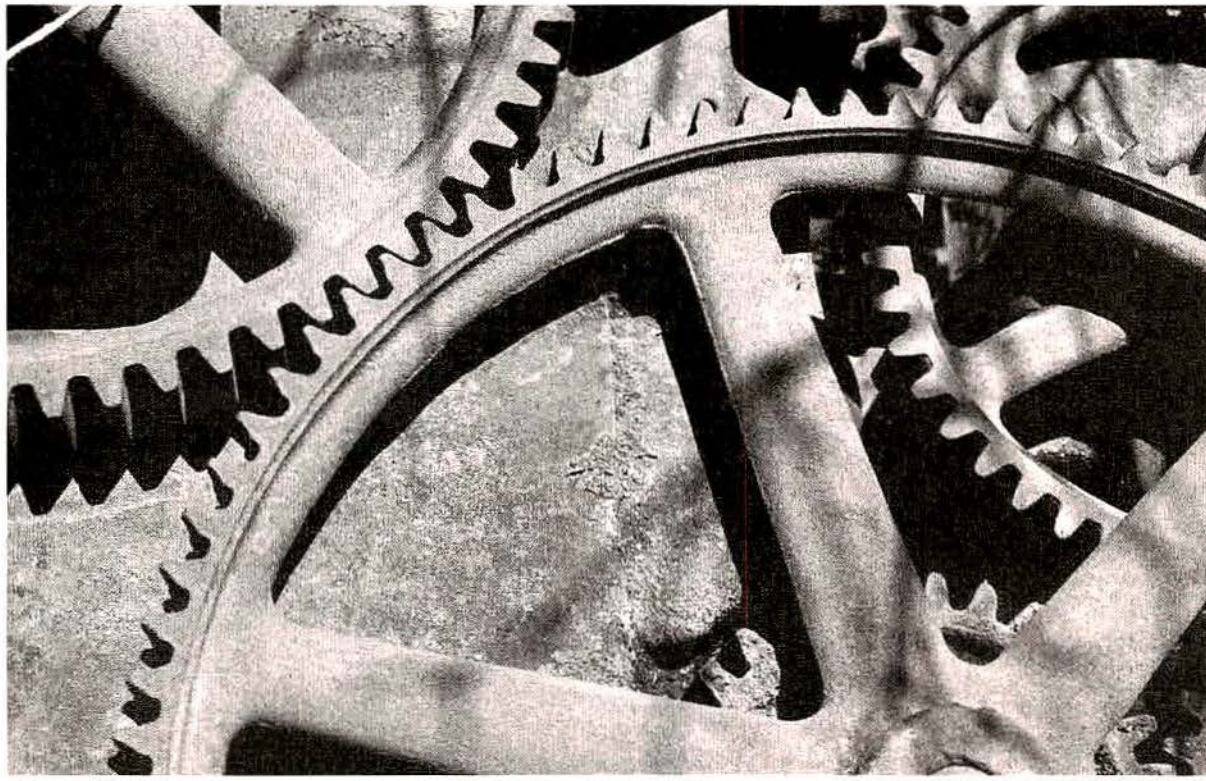
CIRCLE (30) ON FAST FACT CARD

The pursuit of interoperability

Interoperability *can* be accomplished through several methods. Public safety agencies must identify options and make the most feasible choice—temporary or permanent.

By Peter Pflasterer



Safety of life and property can only be assured when public safety agencies can *easily* communicate with one another. All too often, the different systems they use preclude them from communicating at all. Agencies must have high-quality, interoperable communications at their disposal to ensure effective and timely coordination of disaster responses. Recent high-profile incidents, coupled with the events of Sept. 11, have drawn into sharp focus the need for voice radio interoperability both for routine day-to-day use and during emergencies.

What is interoperability?

A good definition of interoperability can be found on the Advanced Generation of Interoperability for Law Enforcement program Web page (**www.agileprogram.org**): "Interoperability is the ability of two or more parties (e.g., public safety agencies) to exchange information, when and where it is needed, even when disparate communication/information systems are involved. Information may be exchanged among fixed facilities, mobile platforms and portable (personal) devices."

Providing interoperability

To be most effective, interoperability needs to be available for daily operations and for emergency use. Additional considerations include suitability for disaster sites as well as fixed-station use, ease and speed of deployment, central control capability, network capacity of the system and cost. Communications interoperability can be obtained with:

Consoles — Communications consoles in many LMR systems can interconnect different agencies' radio channels. This can provide day-to-day interoperability, but console operators can become quickly overloaded during emergencies. Additionally, only those agencies whose channels are accessible through the console can be interconnected, precluding important agencies whose participation

Pflasterer is president of JPS Communications, Raleigh, NC.

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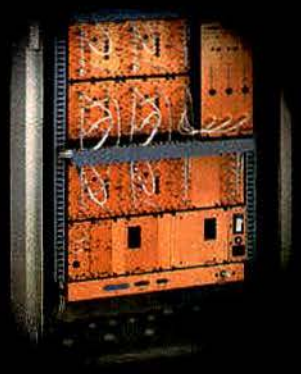

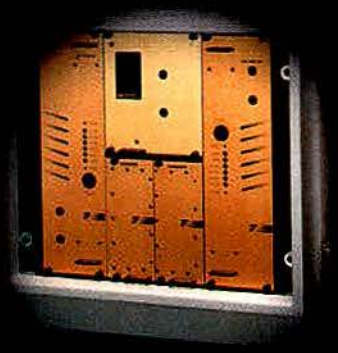

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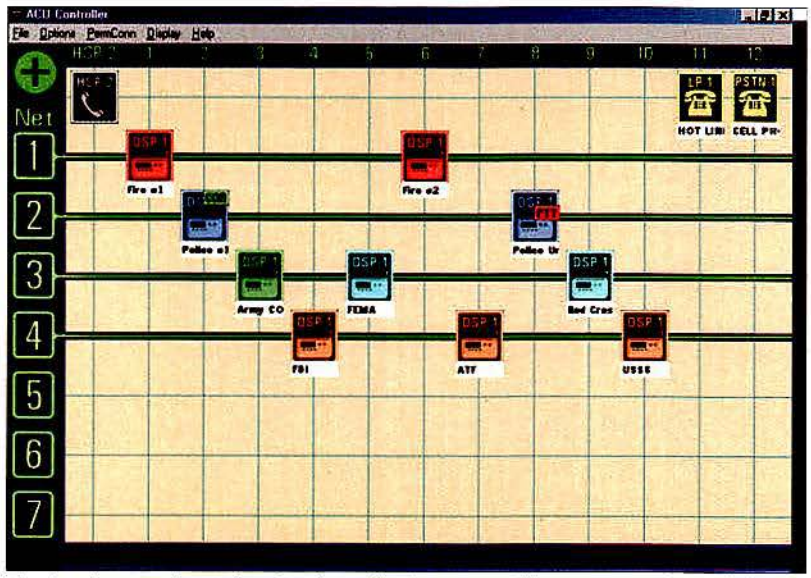

The implementation of a simple radio interoperability system using the ACU-1000 Gateway from JPS Communications. City police, fire and state police can communicate with each other through the gateway when needed. Cross connections between radio channels can be established and broken by an operator at the computer terminal or via DTMF signals from radios in the field.

is crucial during emergencies, particularly agencies that are brought in to deal with specific situations.

Mutual aid channels — Many city and county LMR systems have a mutual aid channel available that is useful for daily interoperability. Disadvantages for emergency use include difficulty of usage coordination and the fact that field radios may not contain the mutual-aid channel. Only those agencies with access to the mutual-aid channel can be interconnected, which can leave out important agencies whose participation is needed during emergencies.

Collocated communications devices — Interoperability may be handled at the scene of a disaster by an officer operating a number of different radios while relaying messages between radio channels. Although inexpensive and

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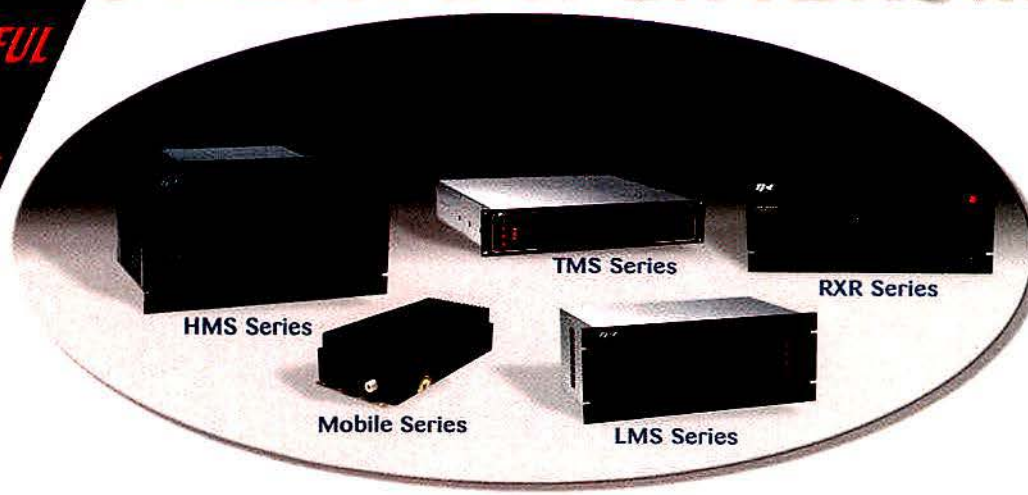

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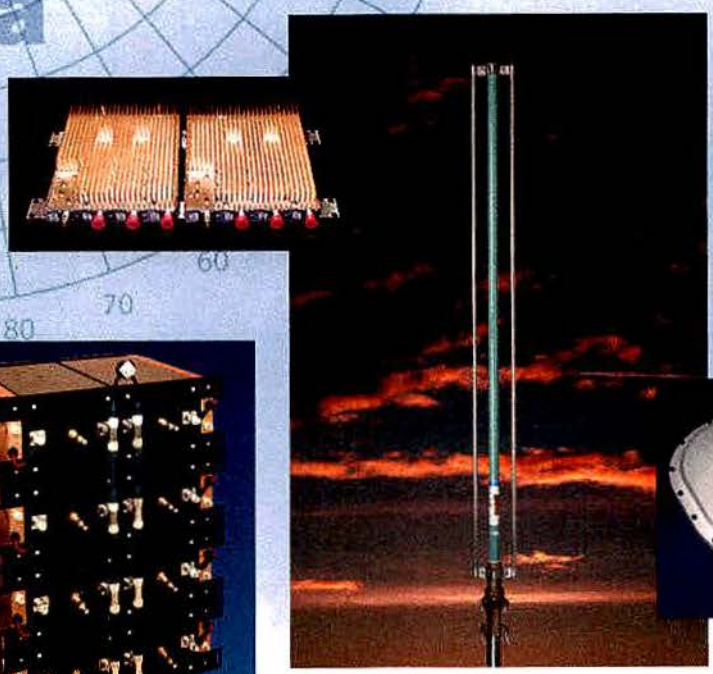

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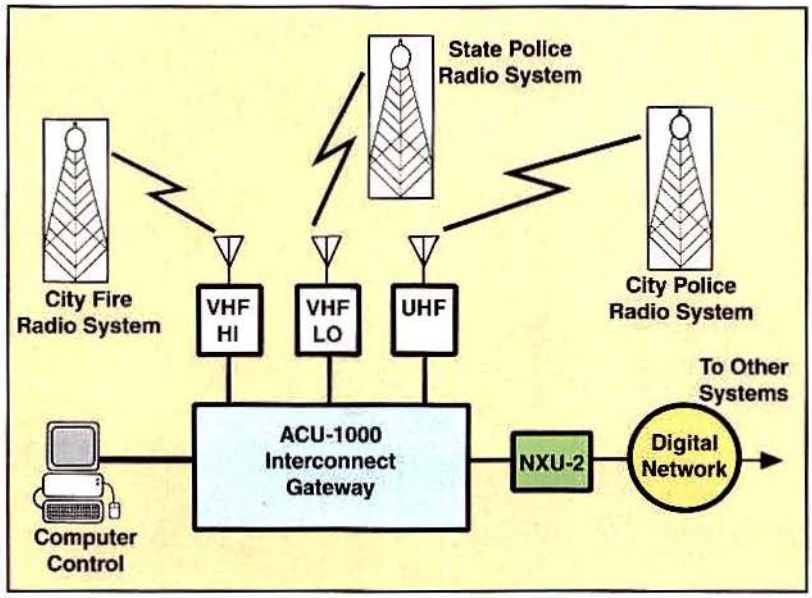


ACU controller software runs on a PC and allows an operator to control the interoperability network from a central location. It shows 10 communications channels connected in four nets. Net 1 contains Fire #1 and Fire #2 channels. Net 2 contains two police channels. Net 3 contains channels from the Army COE, FEMA and Red Cross. Net 4 contains FBI, ATF and USSS channels.

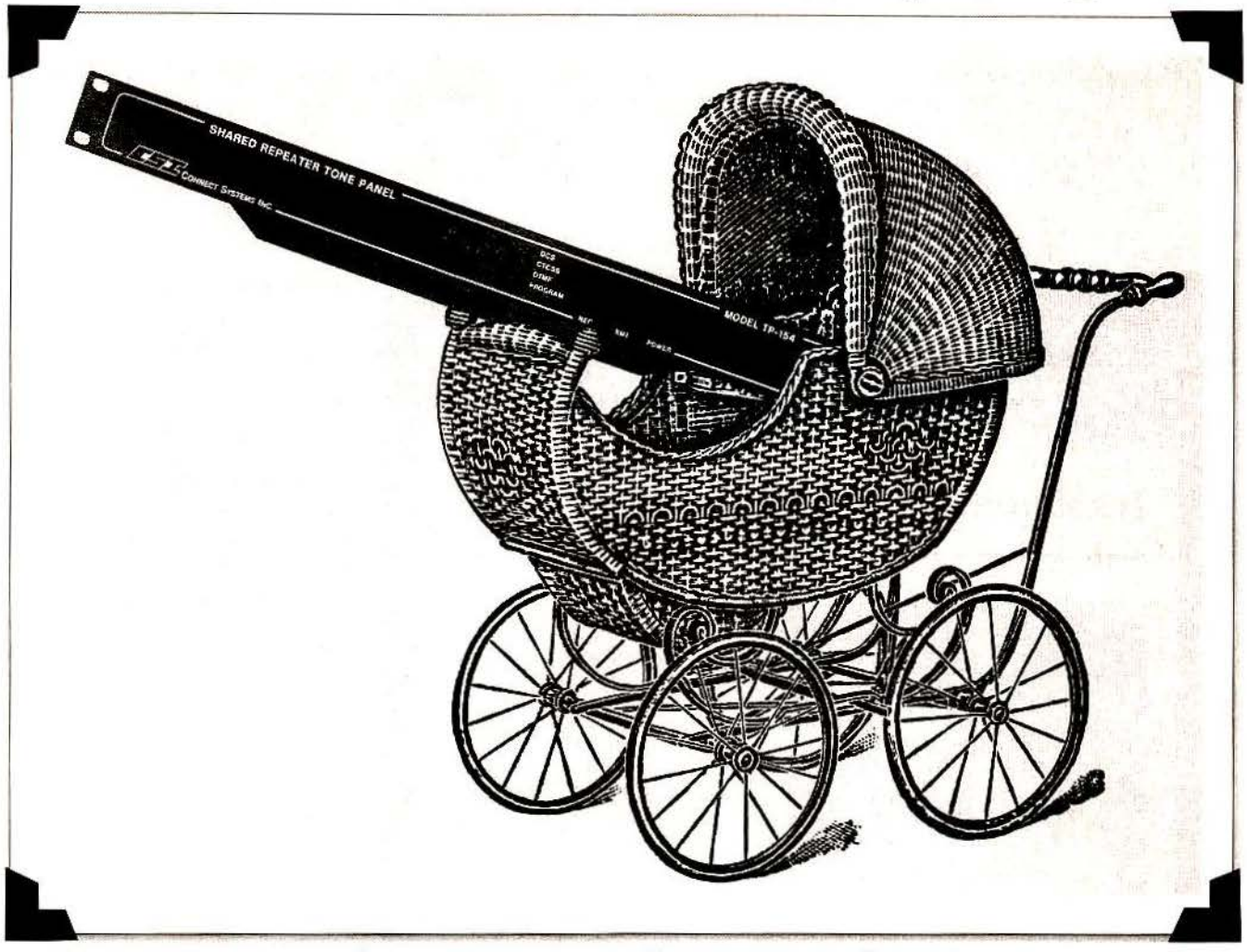
quick to deploy at a disaster, the operator's inability to deal with simultaneous conversations is a major system limitation.

Cellular and landline phones — Telephone service can be a convenient means of providing day-to-day interoperability. However, during disasters, cellular service may be unavailable because of circuit overload; landline circuits can be similarly affected. Landline phones can't reach officers in the field, and telephones don't provide a dispatch-type operating environment.

Trunked radio systems — Trunked radio systems provide excellent daily and disaster communications interoperability among talk groups in the system. Agencies "foreign" to the trunked radio system can interoperate through the trunked system with the aid of a cross-connect gateway.

CIRCLE (34) ON FAST FACT CARD

New Kids on the Block?



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Cross-connect gateway — A cross-connect gateway operates by transparently interconnecting radio audio paths so that agencies can patch into each other's radio channels in real time. This modular, off-the-shelf unit is designed to implement flexible interoperability systems and includes the capability not only to interconnect radio transceivers, but also landline and cellphones. A transportable version housed in a rugged case is available for use at disaster sites. The entire system can be easily controlled from a central point using a computer running controller software. Using this software, rapid set-up and tear down of cross communications paths can be made as needs arise, with quick set up of individual talk nets involving multiple agencies.

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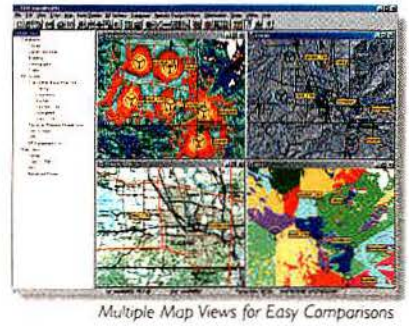

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Cost-effective interoperability

Trunked radio and cross-connect gateways are two methods that have the flexibility to provide seamless interconnectivity with few disadvantages. Of these two, the cross-connect gateway is the quickest and cheapest to deploy. This is because it works with existing radio infrastructure, allowing agencies to use radios, repeaters and frequency allocations that are already in place. A cross-connect gateway can interconnect 24 radio channels and can be installed and up-and-running in hours at a cost less than $25,000 for a single site.

Using the gateway and a network extension unit (a VoIP device), a multisite statewide interoperability network can be deployed site-by-site as funding becomes available. This type of system is currently being deployed in Maryland.

Implementation of a trunked radio system in most cases requires the complete replacement of an agency's radio infrastructure with deployment times measured in months to years and costs in the millions of dollars. Also, the trunked system still may not include all the agencies that must respond to an emergency, particularly those brought in to deal with specific situations, such as a hazardous spill or a terrorist situation.

A cross-connect gateway is a low-cost option to provide inter-operability even when plans include the eventual installation of a trunked radio system. The gateway also works well within existing trunking systems, where it can provide compatibility with legacy radio systems and help fill in coverage holes. ■

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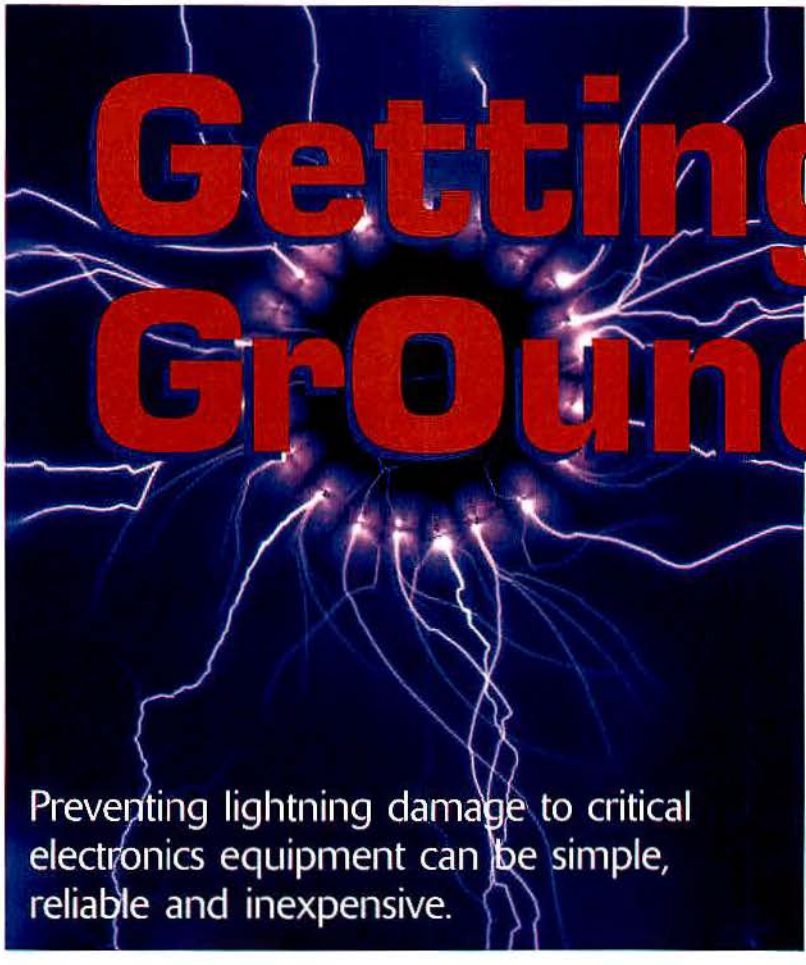
Getting GrOunded



Preventing lightning damage to critical electronics equipment can be simple, reliable and inexpensive.

By Ernest M. Duckworth Jr., P.E.

With more than 150 lightning strikes per second, damage to equipment brings losses exceeding $26 billion annually in North America and nearly three times that amount worldwide. Insurance payments for lightning damage claims total 6.5% of all property and casualty claims. Ironically, damage to equipment can be prevented.

Methods that prevent lightning damage are simple, reliable and inexpensive when compared to the cost of repair—not to mention possible injury or death. Remarkably, methods for lightning protection cannot be found in building codes such as the National Electrical Code or the National Electrical Safety Code. Yet, builders rely on these codes for practically all construction in the United States.

Electrical equipment damage from lightning usually can be blamed on one or two reasons: 1) improper or insufficient grounding and 2) no special protection from a ground potential rise (GPR). Improper or insufficient grounding allows equipment to be stressed or damaged by a difference in electrical potential from nearby equipment and metal objects as current flow is misdirected. A lack of special protection from a GPR allows equipment to be stressed because of its attachment to a remote ground through communications wire lines or power-supply wiring.

Standard protection for the termination of communications wireline services is the gas tube. Gas tubes are shunting devices that can be found on virtually every telephone pair terminated in homes and buildings. They are designed to shunt (connect to ground) "incoming energy," and thereby protect equipment and people from harm.

However, no shunting device protects electronic equipment from a GPR, or "outgoing energy." High outgoing current flow from a lightning strike effectively lifts electrical ground. During a GPR, the shunting devices are connected to an elevated ground and merely offer an additional current path from the site to a remote ground. In this unfortunate way, gas tubes guarantee a connection of the communications path in the reverse direction from which they were intended to operate when there is a GPR. (See Figure 1.)

Dangers from outgoing energy

The outgoing energy from a GPR places most telephone and power installations at risk for equipment damage and the people near them at risk for harm. One of the most dangerous locations for people is a 9-1-1 public safety answering point. The typical PSAP is a small building beneath a large radio tower. The tall tower supports radio communications antennas and forms a lightning target. Workers taking emergency calls must be at the PSAP phones constantly. They do not have the luxury of staying off the phone during lightning

Duckworth is strategic accounts manager at SNC Manufacturing, Oshkosh, WI.

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storms, which is recommended in virtually every telephone book.

The only effective method of protecting equipment connected to wireline communications from a GPR is through isolation—using optical isolators or isolation transformers. These devices prevent current flow. With no metallic path, there will not be outgoing current flow, equipment damage or risk of injury to workers. (See Figure 2.)

To control lightning-strike energy as it dissipates requires division. There is no substitute for division for successfully dissipating the energy because of the magnitude of the current and the resulting surge impedance of any single dissipation path. Using 10 radials connected to a ground ring that is bonded to an antenna divides lightning current into 10 smaller segments. This division helps to ensure that the lightning will follow the grounding conductors for dissipation into the earth. The improved dissipation also serves to reduce the resulting GPR to the adjacent equipment-building grounding system.

The copper wire grounding system can be greatly improved by placing conducting cement around the radials at the time of installation. The cement hardens into concrete, protecting the grounding system and giving it many more years of life. It also gives the system a lower ground resistance.

Tower location

Equipment buildings must be at least 30 feet from antenna towers. This is done to avoid damage caused to electronic circuits by the magnetic field associated with lightning. Magnetic field strength drops off as the square of the distance. If the real estate configuration prevents separating the building at least 30 feet from its antenna tower, consideration must be given to engineering a Faraday cage (wire mesh) around the interior of the building. Without a Faraday cage, equipment damage cannot be prevented no matter how well the equipment is grounded or isolated from remote ground.

Another reason to place equipment buildings or shelters at least 30 feet from antenna towers is to keep the lightning GPR at the tower base from saturating the building grounding system before most of the energy is dissipated in the earth. The grounding systems for the building and its tower must be bonded together at one single point, but a bond of 30 feet or more will significantly reduce the resulting

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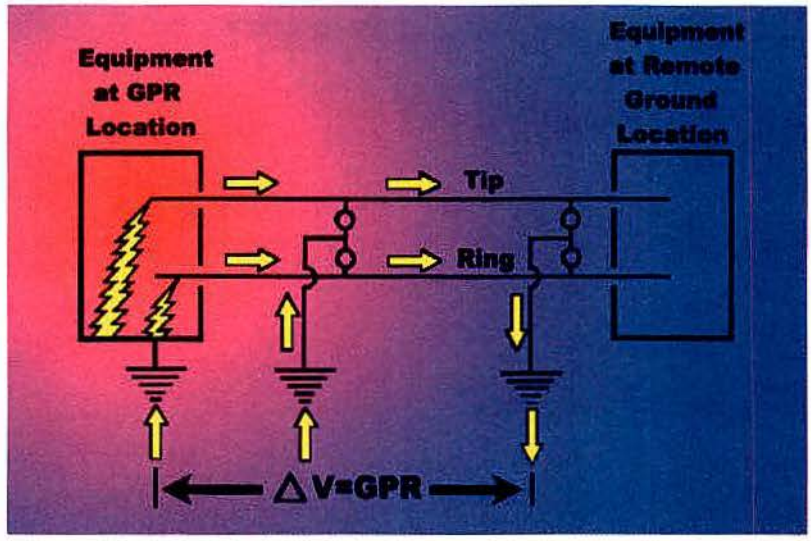

Figure 1. Communications without isolation protection.

GPR at the shelter because of the impedance of the lengthy bond. This is a rare exception in which a lengthy bond is an advantage in supporting a robust grounding system.

Single-point grounding (a "ground window") is absolutely necessary to prevent equipment damage because the GPR from lightning strikes is a wave of rising voltage or an energy surge that passes through a grounding system. The nature of the wave demands that all equipment should be bonded to the grounding system at one location to ensure that the electrical potential of every metallic object connected to it rises and falls together. (See Figure 3.)

Anyone using equipment susceptible to GPR must be protected by a single-point grounding system to guarantee that they won't be injured by touching different pieces of equipment that otherwise might have different and harmful electrical potentials when lightning strikes. This phenomenon is also known as "touch potential."

The use of a ground window (also called a bulkhead panel or

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MODEL	CONT. (Amps)	ICS	SIZE (Inches)	Wt.(lbs.)
SS-25M*	20	25	2⅞ x 7 x 9⅝	4.2
SS-30M*	25	30	3¾ x 7 x 9⅝	5.0

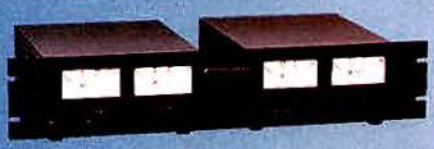
MODEL SRM-30

RACKMOUNT SWITCHING POWER SUPPLIES

MODEL	CONT. (Amps)	ICS	SIZE (Inches)	Wt.(lbs.)
SRM-10	7	10	3½ x 19 x 9⅝	4.3
SRM-12	10	12	3½ x 19 x 9⅝	4.7
SRM-18	15	18	3½ x 19 x 9⅝	5.0
SRM-25	20	25	3½ x 19 x 9⅝	6.5
SRM-30	25	30	3½ x 19 x 9⅝	7.0

WITH SEPARATE VOLT & AMP METERS

MODEL	CONT. (Amps)	ICS	SIZE (Inches)	Wt.(lbs.)
SRM-25M	20	25	3½ x 19 x 9⅝	6.5
SRM-30M	25	30	3½ x 19 x 9⅝	7.0



MODEL SRM-30M-2

2 ea SWITCHING POWER SUPPLIES ON ONE RACK PANEL

MODEL	CONT. (Amps)	ICS	SIZE (Inches)	Wt.(lbs.)
SRM-25-2	20	25	3½ x 19 x 9⅝	10.5
SRM-30-2	25	30	3½ x 19 x 9⅝	11.0

WITH SEPARATE VOLT & AMP METERS

MODEL	CONT. (Amps)	ICS	SIZE (Inches)	Wt.(lbs.)
SRM-25M-2	20	25	3½ x 19 x 9⅝	10.5
SRM-30M-2	25	30	3½ x 19 x 9⅝	11.0

MODEL SS-12SM/GTX

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SS-10V, SS-12V, SS-18V

CIRCLE (43) ON FAST FACT CARD

*ICS – Intermittent Communication Service

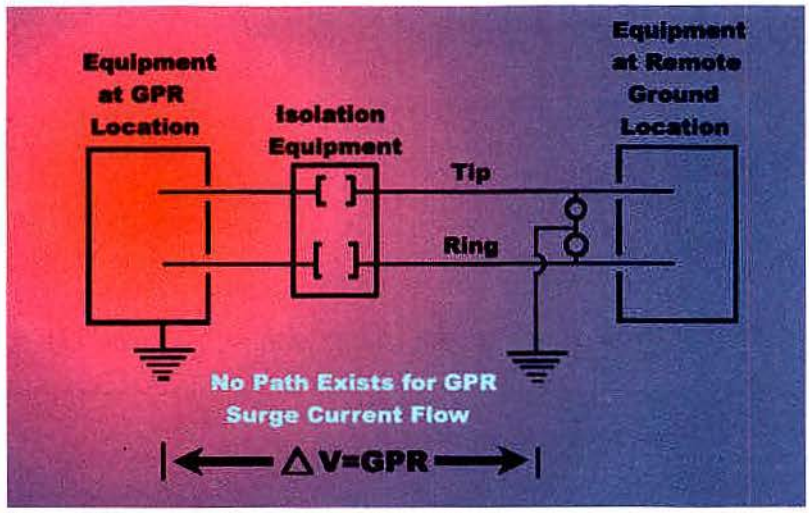

Figure 2. Communications with isolation protection.

waveguide hatch) where coax cables, waveguide and antenna wires penetrate the wall of the equipment building is indispensable. The bulkhead is made of solid copper. Its proper engineering design and installation will ensure that lightning energy does not enter the equipment building on cables from the antenna tower.

The bulkhead must be bonded to the building grounding system at the single-point grounding location—the same single point ground where the tower grounding system is bonded to the building grounding system.

Isolate wireline comms

A lightning strike to a grounding system produces an elevated ground or GPR. Any equipment bonded to the grounding system and also connected to wireline communications is likely to be damaged by outgoing current seeking remote ground. Individuals who may be working on equipment connected to the wire lines could be harmed because they would be in the path of the outgoing current.

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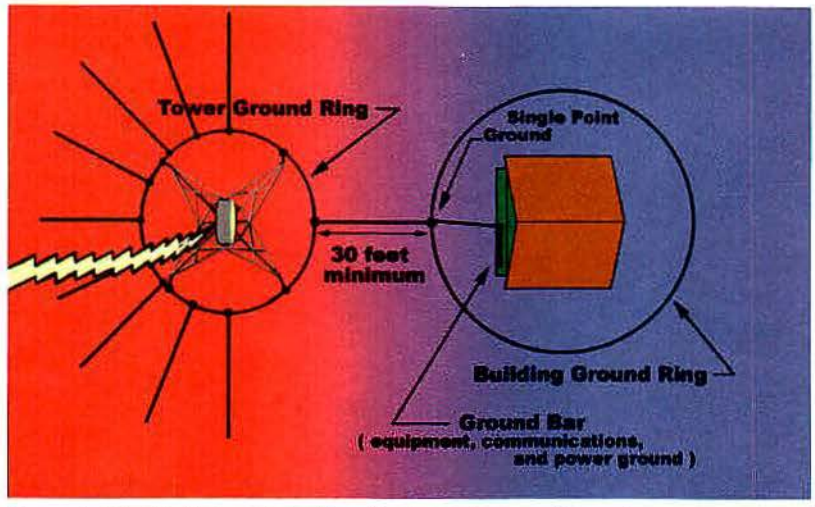

Figure 3. Ideal lightning dissipating single-point grounding system.

remote ground. Isolation is accomplished using optical isolators, isolation transformers or both. The isolation equipment, called the high-voltage interface, is housed together and mounted on a nonconducting surface in a nonconducting cabinet.

The HVI isolates the communications equipment during a GPR and prevents a current from flowing from the grounding system with higher electrical potential to a grounding system with a lower potential. The isolation completely protects equipment from damage and people from harm.

Simple lightning protection

Simple, reliable and inexpensive protection methods can prevent lightning damage to equipment. The three most important concepts are:

1) divide and control the lightning strike energy.
2) design a true single-point ground system.
3) isolate wire-line facilities from a remote ground.

A reliable, well engineered grounding design will all but completely eliminate lightning threats to equipment and people. ■

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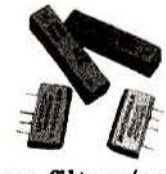

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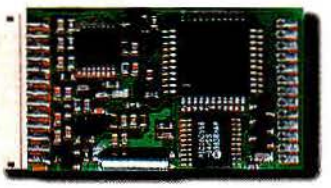

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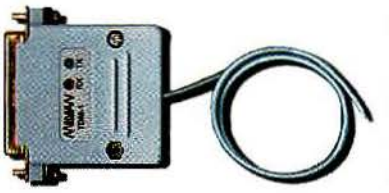

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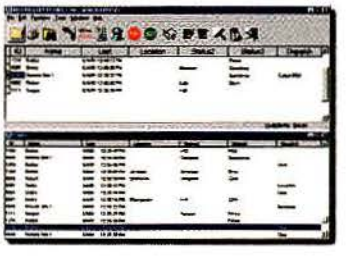

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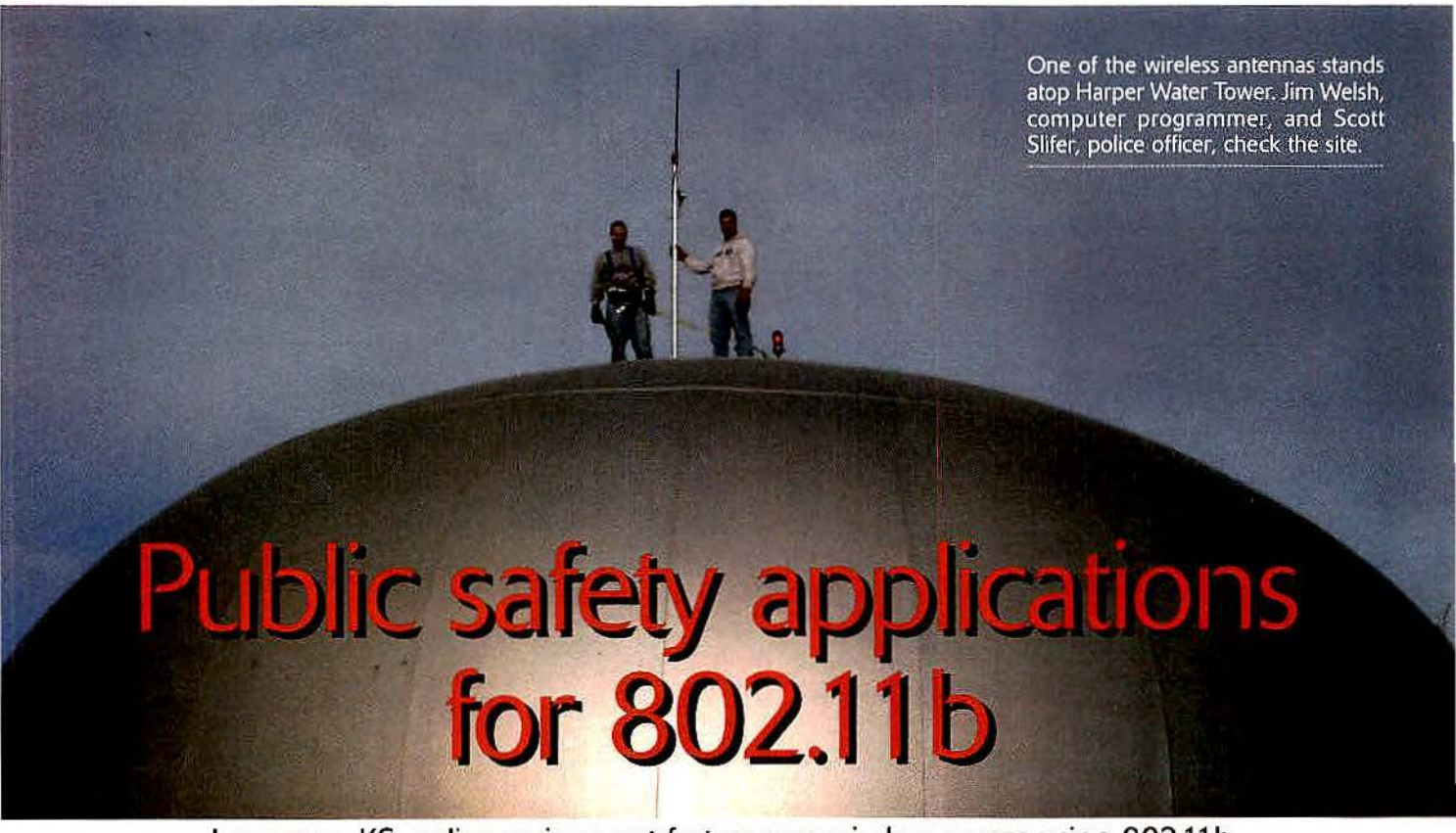


One of the wireless antennas stands atop Harper Water Tower. Jim Welsh, computer programmer, and Scott Slifer, police officer, check the site.

Public safety applications for 802.11b

Lawrence, KS, police cruisers get fast, secure wireless access using 802.11b.

By James Careless

802.11b: Don't let the jargony name scare you. In plain English, 802.11b merely describes the standard for transmitting data at speeds as high as 11Mbps, on the unlicensed 2.4GHz band.

802.11b wireless technology is special for two reasons. First, it makes it possible to extend a high-speed network quickly because wires do not have to be installed. Second, 802.11b is relatively cheap compared to the expense of adding T1 or even lower-speed ISDN lines.

"For minimizing infrastructure between buildings, 802.11b is so much more cost-efficient compared to T1 or ISDN," said William A. "Sam" Smith, a systems analyst with the city of Lawrence, KS. "With 802.11b, you can establish a link between buildings with 4MB throughput for about $3,000 and you own the infrastructure."

But that's not all 802.11b can do, as the Lawrence, KS, Police Department has discovered. By creating 802.11b links between its wired wide-area network and 14 LKPD cruisers (plus four more owned and operated by the University of Kansas), the LKPD has given its patrol cars the same connectivity found in the station house.

Strategic considerations

The only downside? Due to budget constraints, not all of the LKPD's cruisers are equipped with 802.11b transceivers and hardened Panasonic laptops. As a result, "at a shift change, our officers run out to get a car that has a laptop," said Lt. David L. Cobb, who heads the LKPD's Information Technology department. "It's a shift supervisor's dream."

For the LKPD, maximizing resource use is a must. "We are a lean department," said Cobb. "We are under the 1.5 officers-per-thousand-population national average. In fact, Lawrence only has 0.75 officers per thousand.

"As a result, we find ourselves going from call to call," he added. "To cope, we're trying to stretch what our officers can do. That's why we try to keep them out in the field, so that our response times are faster."

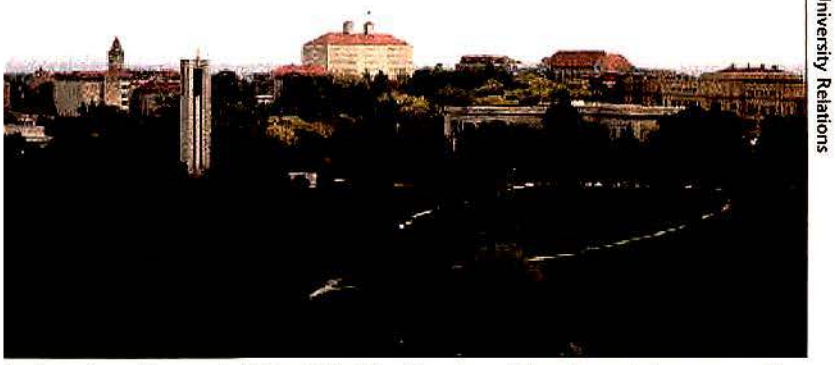
This is where 802.11b makes such a difference. Rather than losing precious time writing reports at the station, LKPD officers can compile them in their cars. After all, "when they do come to the station, it takes time to park the car, walk up the steps to the second floor, sit down and maybe get interrupted," Cobb said. "As a result, each officer uses up a minimum of 20 minutes per station visit, without actually getting any work done."

Ironically, the LKPD didn't

Careless is a freelance telecommunications writer based in Ottawa, ON, Canada. His email address is *james@tjtdesign.com*.

initially adopt 802.11b to solve this problem. Instead, it chose wireless networking when the department was split into two separate locations.

"We were all in one center until a year ago," Cobb said. "Then the city purchased a building in the west end. Today, the chief of police, the training department and the detectives have moved to that building. Meanwhile, the patrol division, technology and evidence are in the old building at 111 E. 11th."



KU University Relations

A view from the roof of the 11th Street police station toward the new police building several miles beyond. The horizon shows that line-of-sight radio propagation between the police facilities is blocked by Mount Oread, home of the University of Kansas campus.

Tactical realities

For the LKPD, it was vital to have connectivity between our two sites. "When they moved out last year, we had the daunting task not only of duplicating phone lines, but paying for it," Cobb said. Well, the city is on a tight budget; we couldn't afford to physically duplicate our wired networks. That's why we went to 802.11b instead."

To provide the LKPD with 802.11b connectivity, the department has installed eight towers

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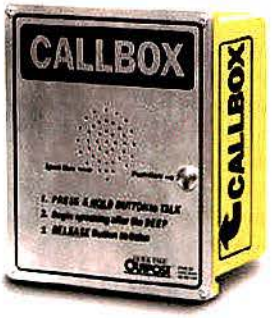

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throughout the region, with nine "bridges" to connect the 2.4GHz portals to the LKPD WAN.

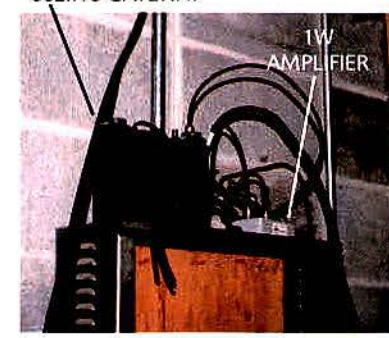
"The network is built on Cisco Aeronet equipment," Smith said. "The bridges are Cisco 340 bridges. For each site, you need a 42-inch omni antenna with 12dB gain, cabling, amplifier, UPS, timer and a box to put it all in—plus a galvanized steel pole, of course, to attach the antenna to."

As for the all-important cost? This is where 802.11b really comes through for the LKPD.

"The outside figure on each tower is $4,000 per tower," Smith said. "For each vehicle, 802.11b technology is $1,500 plus the cost of the laptop. Finally, the firewall technology—which keeps outsiders from using the wireless portals to hack into our WAN—works out to about $3,000 to $4,000 per site."

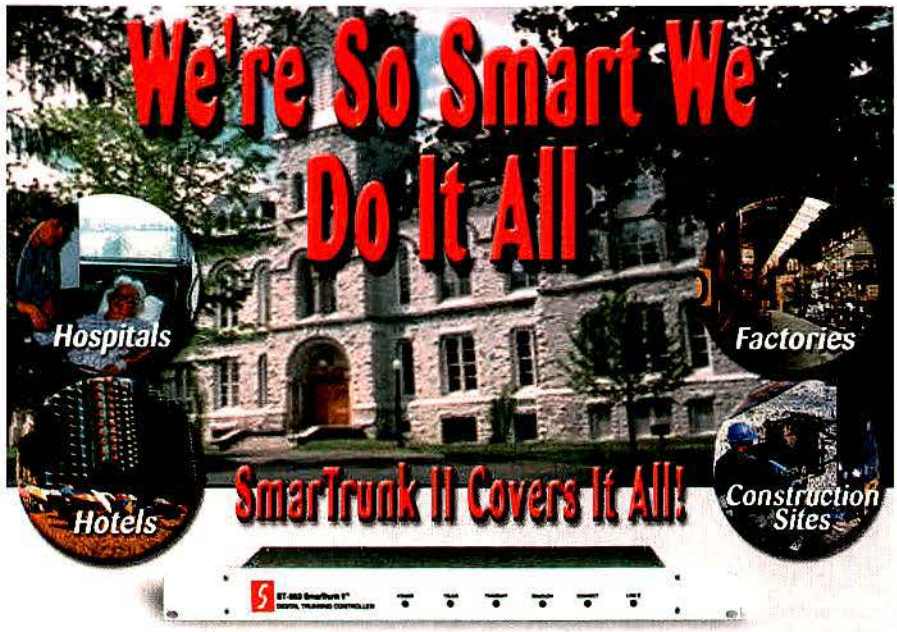
Smith said that every last

802.11b GATEWAY



To boost range a little, the 100mW output of the 802.11b gateway is fed to an RF amplifier.

Omnidirectional 12dB gain antennas for the 802.11 gateways in the 11th Street police station fit on tower side-mounts.



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"For minimizing infrastructure between buildings, 802.11b is so much more cost-efficient compared to T1 or ISDN."
—William A. "Sam" Smith, systems analyst.

"... We're trying to stretch what our officers can do. That's why we try to keep them out in the field, so that our response times are faster."
—Lt. David L. Cobb, head of LKPD's Information Technology department.

piece was off-the-shelf commodity equipment. "Which is both a benefit and a problem. With off-the-shelf equipment, the price is driven down. But because of that, and because there is so much equipment out there, it is susceptible to attack. If you don't have it set up properly, it is possible to break into it."

So the department uses inherent wireless equivalency protocol encryption with the 802.11b units. "We treat that infrastructure as being external to our network," Smith said. "We've put firewalls between it and the department; officers have to log in using passwords, in order to get access, as well."

Pros ...

For LKPD officers equipped with Panasonic laptops and 802.11b access, the daily grind has become significantly easier.

It's not just the convenience of writing reports in their cars, rather than back at the office. What really makes 802.11b powerful for patrol cars is the connectivity it provides.

With this technology, "officers in cars can look up cases and phone numbers or go to the Internet," Smith said. "They have all of their resources in the car as they would have in a 'traveling office.'

"Another benefit comes from being able to call up mug shots," Cobb said. " If a suspect swears it isn't him, the officer can walk him back to see the photo on the laptop and say, 'Actually, this is you.'"

Officers also have instant access to bulletins that they can look up daily. "They can also take photos and load them into the host computer, and download photos to the laptop without coming into the station, using the digital photo linkup," Cobb said.

... And cons

Of course, no system is perfect, and 802.11b is no exception.

Its major limitation is range. Under ideal conditions, the most one can hope for is one-quarter to one-half mile's worth of coverage.

"If you're using the conventional power of the bridges, you're limited to 100mW," Smith said. "You can amplify those to 1W, but that still limits you to quarter to half-mile radial line of sight. That's unlike a data stream on an 800MHz system, which would cover an entire area."

To make things tougher, "802.11b signals at 2.4GHz are absorbed by water," Smith said. "Any water-bearing object in the path cuts the signal, including rain."

802.11b is worth considering

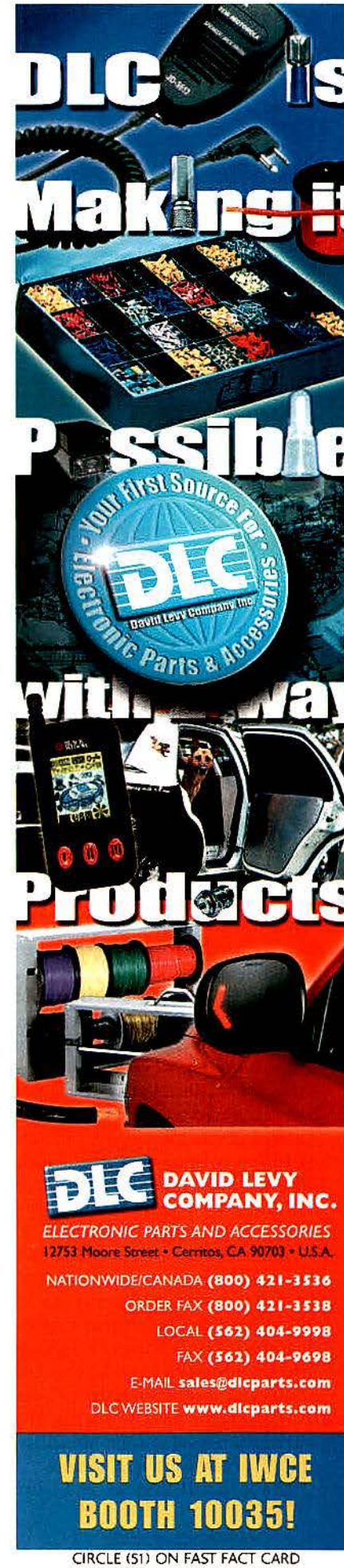
Limitations aside, the LKPD is still pleased with 802.11b and so are its police officers.

"We have no formal research," Cobb said. "But the officers seem happy with what they have."

So is 802.11b worth considering for your department? Yes. It offers a range of advantages at an affordable cost.

One added bonus: "We have some secrets we won't publicize that might help other departments to make the technology work for them," Cobb said. "They can contact us by emailing *smith@lkpd.org*."

For public safety network users—and the people who sell them equipment—802.11b's time has definitely come. ■



CIRCLE (51) ON FAST FACT CARD

The changing demands of modern battery testers

With memory no longer posing a problem to battery testers, they have assumed new tasks such as performance verification and the energizing of 'sleepy' batteries.

By Isidor Buchmann

In the past, one of the main purposes of a battery analyzer was to exercise and restore NiCd batteries affected by the "memory" effect. With today's nickel-free batteries, however, memory is no longer a problem. Lithium-based batteries do not need a periodic discharge; these batteries cannot be restored through cycling when weak.

So, the modern battery analyzer has assumed some new duties. These include the priming of new batteries, performance verification through quick testing and energizing batteries that have fallen asleep due to deep discharge.

Common sense suggests that a new battery should always perform flawlessly, yet many packs fail to meet manufacturer's specifications. With a battery analyzer, incoming batteries can be checked as part of quality control. Packs that perform poorly during the warranty period can be identified and returned for replacement.

The typical life of a Li-ion battery is 300 to 500 discharge/charge cycles or two to three years from time of manufacturing. The loss of battery capacity occurs gradually and often without the awareness of the user. The function of the battery analyzer is to identify weak batteries and weed them out before they become a problem. This task is especially pertinent in a fleet environment. The loss of adequate battery power is as detrimental as any other malfunction in the system.

Troubleshoot short run times

A battery analyzer can also troubleshoot a short run time. This is a common complaint, and multiple causes can contribute to this problem. In some instances, the battery may not be properly formatted when first put into service. Repeated cycling can correct this. Another problem is incomplete charge when charged with the original charger. A battery analyzer can help to compare the capacity when charged with the original charger, to the capacity when charged by the analyzer.

Another common cause of a short run time is high internal battery resistance brought on by use and aging. Many analyzers can measure the internal battery resistance. Some instruments can simulate the load signature drawn by a digital device to verify the run time according to load requirements.

Higher-than-specified power consumption is another reason for short run times. This, however, is mostly related to the way the equipment is being used.

Lithium-based batteries are sensitive to aging. If stored fully charged at elevated temperatures, the battery can deteriorate to 50% capacity in about one year. Similar performance degradations are observed on NiMH batteries when

Buchmann is the founder and chief executive of Cadex Electronics, Richmond, British Columbia, Canada.

used under the same conditions. Although the battery is still considered new, the user will blame the equipment rather than the battery for poor performance. The analyzer can isolate such problems quickly and accurately.

With the increased dependence on battery power, the need for quick battery testing becomes apparent. Various test schemes have been introduced over the years, but none has caught on. Most have inherent problems with accuracy.

The battery needs to be fully charged before testing because different charge levels interfere with the state-of-health readings. Defense organizations invest heavily in quick battery testing, only to come up with textbook methods that require large computers that must build up extensive data banks of reference material for each battery type checked. In addition, the test time is often too long to be practical.

Quick testing

New techniques measure the state-of-health of a battery in three minutes. Cadex Electronics' Quicktest is based on interference technology and uses battery-specific matrices that are derived through a "trend learning" process using artificial intelligence. The ability to self-learn enables the system to adapt to new battery chemistries without having to change hardware.

These new techniques can accommodate Li-ion, NiMH, NiCd and lead-acid batteries; the required charge level is 20% to 90%. If outside this range, the analyzer automatically applies a brief charge or discharge. The charge level within this acceptable range does not affect the state-of-health readings.

The matrix obtained through the "learn" function is stored in the battery adapters that also contain the battery parameters to configure the analyzer. One "learn" cycle is the minimum requirement for developing a working matrix. Better results are achieved when *learning* several batteries with varying state-of-health conditions. Once attained, the matrix can be copied to other battery adapters. Testing a battery with a properly learned matrix achieves an accuracy of ±5% on most batteries.

With quick testing, customer service staff can examine batteries at point of sales. Service centers can quickly separate serviceable batteries from those that exhibit genuine defects. A full maintenance program may be needed to repair those batteries that are serviceable.

A common Li-ion battery failure is caused by excessive low discharge. This deactivates the internal safety

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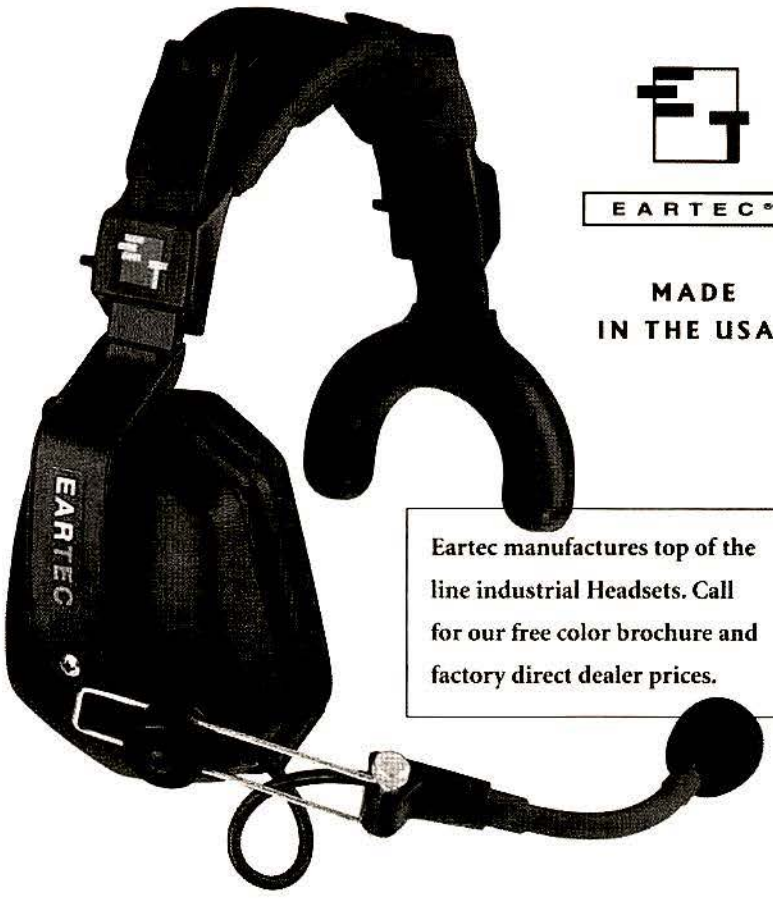

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CIRCLE (52) ON FAST FACT CARD

circuit, and the battery appears dead. Modern analyzers can apply a gentle current to energize the battery. (Cadex calls this function "boost.") Once the voltage reaches charging range, a full-service program verifies the battery.

To judge the effectiveness of this program, Cadex tested a large number of supposedly dead Li-ion polymer batteries from various manufacturers. When first measured, these batteries had no voltage and appeared dead. Charging the packs in their respective chargers was unsuccessful. After "boosting," most batteries accepted normal charge. The analyzer applied a full-service program and attained capacities of 80% and higher in most batteries. All restored packs performed flawlessly when returned to service.

Boosting Lithium-based batteries is safe. However, if the cell voltage has fallen to 1.5V and has dwelled in that state for several days, a recharge should be avoided. A deep discharge may form copper shunts in the cells, which can develop an electrical short. The analyzers are supposed to identify such faults and terminate service.

Nickel-based batteries can also benefit from the "boost" program. Older batteries or those with advanced cycle count exhibit high self-discharge, a condition that cannot be corrected. If activated with boost and left unattended, the battery may revert back to its former state.

Connecting batteries

Connecting batteries for testing has been a challenge for technicians and engineers alike. Many so-called "engineering specials" with springs and levers have appeared, only to disappear because of impracticality. This problem can be solved with a flexible adapter.

A flexible-arm adapter accommodates virtually any battery type. By lowering the two arms fitted with contact probes, narrow and awkwardly placed contacts can be reached. Magnetic guides keep the battery in any position, horizontally or vertically.

The flex-arm adapter requires setting the battery chemistry, voltage and mAh rating. The edit key on the battery analyzer prompts the user to enter the specifications. The battery setting is stored in the arm.

To check batteries with quick testing, a common matrix may be used for packs that have similar chemistry, voltage and capacity rating. This applies to cellphone batteries consisting of a single Li-ion cell. If the readings are inaccurate, a separate matrix will be required for these batteries.

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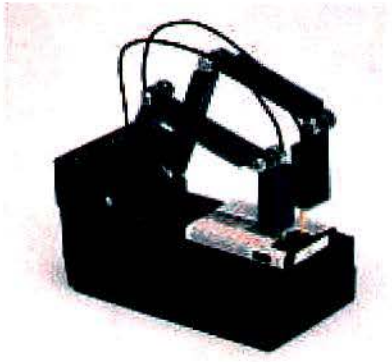

This flex-arm adapter establishes contact by lowering the arms to the battery. Magnetic guides keep the battery in position. (Cadex 7000)

The flexible-arm adapter is best suited for technicians dealing with constantly changing batteries. However, large groups of identical batteries (fleet environment) are best served with custom adapters. These adapters are programmed at the factory and do not require setting of battery parameters.

With batteries flooding the market, the availability of suitable equipment to test them may outpace battery production. This void is especially apparent in the mobile phone market, where large quantities of batteries are being returned under warranty. Many of these presumably faulty packs are discarded without checking or attempting to restore them. In the end, the customer will pay with higher prices.

Testing and restoring batteries has become a complex assignment. Battery analyzers must be simple to operate and must also allow customer service staff to perform the task without much training. Properly used, these instruments will assist in managing the influx of returned batteries. The quick-test feature can sort packs that are serviceable from those that exhibit genuine defects.

Battery testing also serves public safety organizations, rental outfits and defense organizations. With the quick-test feature, a battery can be examined prior to releasing to a customer or assignment for a critical mission. Testing by applying a full charge and discharge cycle is impractical. Being able to verify battery performance on the fly, only those packs that are fit for the job are released. ■

This article contains excerpts from the second edition book, *Batteries in a Portable World — A Handbook on Rechargeable Batteries for Non-Engineers*. The 300-page book is available from Cadex Electronics through book@cadex.com, or 604-231-7777 or most bookstores. For additional information on battery technology visit www.buchmann.ca.

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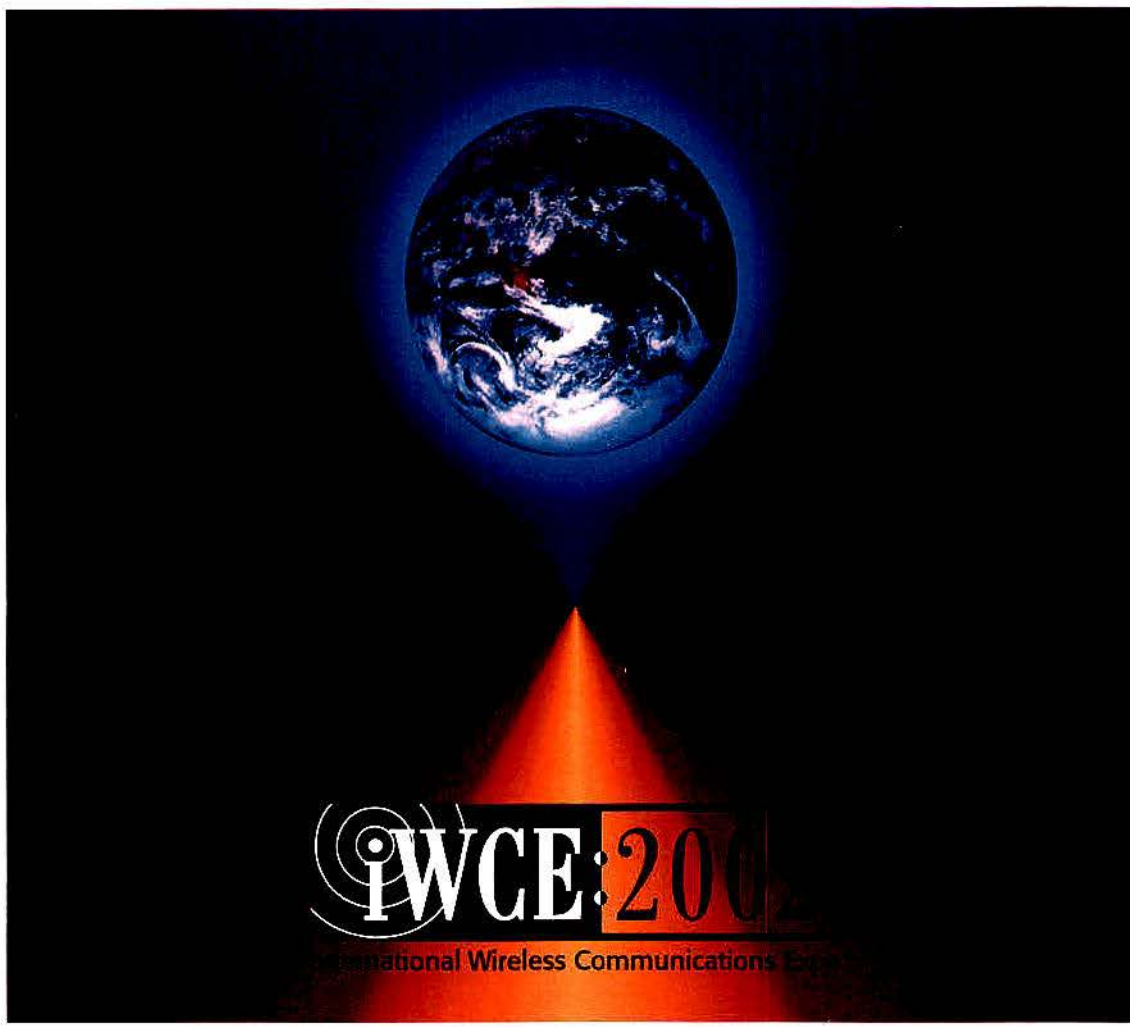
COVERING THE MOBILE COMMUNICATIONS SPECTRUM



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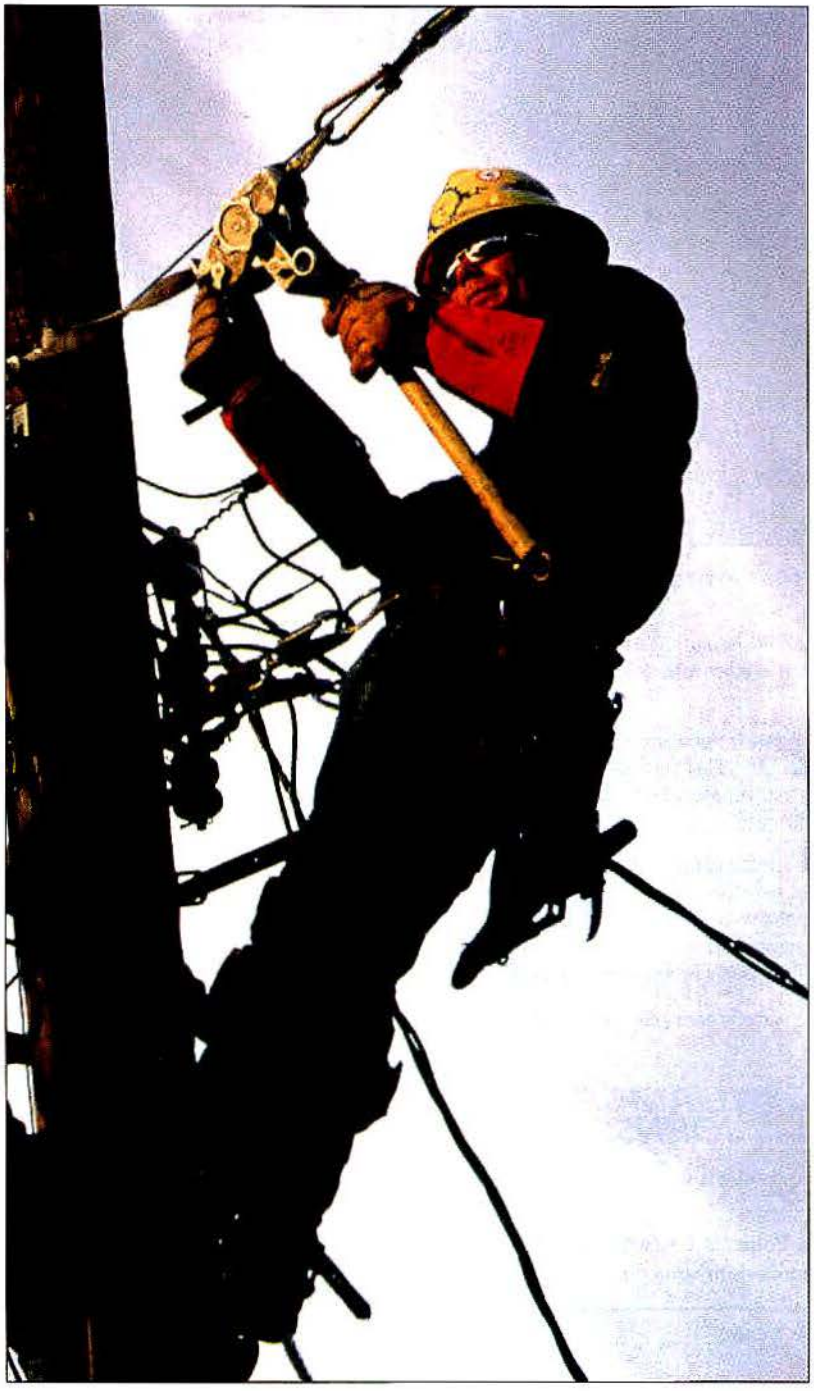
In defense of 800MHz private radio

Finding Nextel's 800MHz reallocation proposal to be 'retaliatory' toward utility companies, American Electric Power explains why Nextel should be held accountable for resolving interference between Nextel systems and public safety radio systems.



By Don Bishop

Covering 200,000 square miles in 11 states with 258 repeater sites, the private trunked radio system operated by American Electric Power, Columbus, OH, is one of the largest in North America. AEP has estimated the value of its wireless communications infrastructure at $100 million.

AEP uses the radio system to support construction and maintenance associated with its 38,000 miles of electrical transmission lines and 186,000 miles of distribution lines that serve more than 4.8 million customers. The company generates 38 billion watts of electricity in the United States.

Large companies with private radio systems normally reserve their political capital to fight battles affecting their core businesses. Congress and regulatory agencies hear from utilities about financial deregulation and environmental questions. Steel companies lobby legislators about tariffs. When it comes to making a case before the FCC, they don't throw their weight around as much as some radio communications industry associations would like.

When Nextel Communications, Reston, VA, asked the FCC to reallocate spectrum from 700MHz to 2.1GHz in a way that would disrupt private radio users in the 800MHz band and lay upon them a huge expense for reconfiguring or replacing their systems, it roused AEP.

Bishop is editorial director. His email address is *dbishop@primediabusiness.com*.

David B. Trego, vice president of telecommunications at AEP, said that AEP has been engineering and operating land mobile radio systems for more than 50 years. The company built its 800MHz system in the past 10 years. It continues to engineer improvements to the system and expects to add 20 base stations within the next two years.

The complex radio network that offers advanced wide-area voice and data communications services to mobile, portable and base station radios is "not a simple patchwork," Trego said.

Although AEP recognizes the importance of public safety LMR communications systems, the company has asserted that utility-owned LMR systems are also critical to the safety and welfare of the general public. Trego wrote in a letter directed to FCC Chairman Michael K. Powell that utility LMR systems are used to dispatch workers in the repair of facilities and restoration of electric service and to coordinate the daily operation of electrical transmission and distribution systems.

Trego pointed out that without proper and timely coordination of operations, restoration and repair functions, communities that utilities serve could be negatively affected. Moreover, LMR systems enhance worker safety in some of the harshest and most dangerous working conditions.

Nextel, meanwhile, has attempted to partner with utilities or to persuade utilities to use Nextel for utility dispatching functions with "very little success," Trego said. AEP, for example, finds that it must operate a private radio communications network to meet the safety and operational requirements of the electric utility business. Commercial wireless networks are not an

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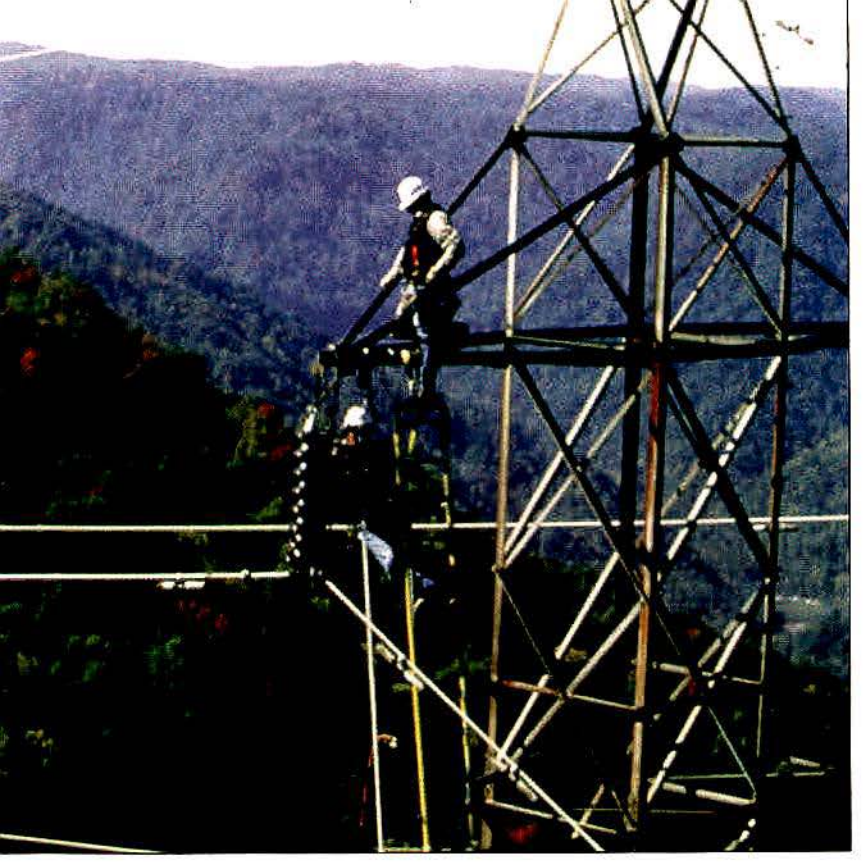

Trego

ence caused by their operations." Trego cited FCC regulation 90.173-(b), which requires licensees to take reasonable steps to avoid creating harmful interference, and he referred to precedent in placing responsibility on Nextel to fix interference that its operations cause to other licensees even when its operations fall completely within its authorized channels.

AEP wants the FCC to hold Nextel solely accountable and not to divert the responsibility by forcing business and industrial/land transportation

Critical to the safety and welfare of the public, utilities must have reliable communications when working to maintain or restore electric power.

AEP Facts

Some facts about American Electric Power's 800MHz radio communications system as of Jan. 2, 2002:

- ❑ One of the largest private trunked radio systems in North America
- ❑ Covers 200,000 square miles in parts of 11 states
- ❑ 58 trunked radio sites
- ❑ Exceeds original design criteria of 90% availability over 90% service territory (200,000 square miles)
- ❑ 132 integrated computer dispatch consoles
- ❑ 7,256 mobile units
- ❑ 3,889 portable radio units
- ❑ 601 mobile data users

option because of limitations related to coverage, availability, reliability and wide-area dispatching.

Referring to Nextel's failure to attract utility business and the fact that its reallocation proposal would offer no compensation to non-public safety entities that would be forced to relocate to other frequency bands, Trego said, "One could view Nextel's proposed realignment as retaliatory in nature."

Trego characterized the proposal as "nothing more than a veiled attempt by Nextel to sidestep their responsibility to resolve interfer-

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CIRCLE (58) ON FAST FACT CARD

systems to move to frequencies in the 700MHz and 900MHz bands.

"Such a move by AEP would be extremely costly as well as enormously disruptive to ongoing utility critical operations," Trego said. He explained that it would require replacing all radio equipment on the AEP network, including mobile and portable units and base station components such as repeaters, combiners, antennas and tower-top amplifiers.

Even moving to another portion of the 800MHz band would be an enormous logistical task of retuning and reprogramming a large number of radios dispersed over a large geographical area while trying to maintain normal utility operations, Trego indicated.

A string of ceramic insulators are being replaced on the tower of a 765kV transmission line.

Trego didn't overlook Nextel's suggestion that business and industrial/land transportation radio communications system users that relocate to the 700MHz or 900MHz bands should be forced to contribute to a fund to help to pay for the relocation of public safety radio system users. "Completely unacceptable" is how he described it. "The cost of correcting harmful interference should be borne by those causing it, not those experiencing it," he said.

That Nextel would reap a windfall in the form of contiguous 800MHz spectrum next to the cellular band and 10MHz of spectrum next to the PCS band at 2GHz wasn't lost on Trego, but he pointed out that Nextel hasn't publicly acknowledged the pot of gold. It's worth "far more than the $500 million they are offering" to relocate public safety, he said.

Moreover, Trego said that Nextel's windfall would be paid for by taxpayers who would fund the public safety relocation costs and by consumers through higher prices of goods and services provided by business and industrial/land transportation licensees when they pass along their relocation costs.

Besides the financial effects on business and industrial/land transportation radio users, Trego said

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Other 800MHz private radio users

In a letter to FCC Chairman Michael Powell, several associations expressed their opposition to a forced relocation of their systems to other frequency bands. The assocations were:

- Aeronautical Radio, Inc (ARINC)
- American Petroleum Institute
- American Association of Railroads
- Forest Industries Telecommunications
- Industrial Telecommunicaitons Association
- United Telecom Council

They cited a sampling of 800MHz systems that would be forced to absorb the relocation costs—in excess of $350 million. The associations suggested that the relocation cost to all displaced 800MHz incumbent private radio users would exceed several billion dollars.

- *Federal Express* — FedEx has spent more than $100 million for its nationwide 800MHz internal communications system used to coordinate its package-delivery couriers, to provide maintenance and security ground support to aircraft, and to assist in the loading and unloading of aircraft and trucks. The system supports more than 40,000 mobile units and 750 base stations. A replacement system in either the 700MHz or 900MHz bands would cost FedEx an estimated $100 million or more.
- *ARINC* — ARINC, Annapolis, MD, has constructed a new digital service at nine airports using Motorola's IDEN technology. The new system is integrated with ARINC's existing nationwide and global communications networks to support all ground operations, including baggage handling, maintenance and airport security. The company plans to install the system at all of its major domestic and international airports. It has already spent $13 million for its digital system, which could not be retuned to operate in either the 700MHz or 900MHz bands. ARINC further estimated that it has $1 million in embedded invested infrastructure at each of the remaining top 50 airports. Each system supports 3,000 to 5,000 mobile radios, which cost $600 to $1,000 each. ARINC estimated the full cost of relocating the 800MHz systems at more than $160 million.

The letter emphasized that the costs would be imposed on users who are not causing interference to public safety systems and who have assumed additional safety-related responsibilities since Sept.11, 2001. "Indeed, the protection of critical infrastructures, which has been a significant focus of recent Congressional and the Executive Branch activities, is an effort that would be seriously harmed through the implementation of this proposal as submitted," the document reads.

The associations expressed concern that Nextel is trying to unfairly solve an interference problem of its own making at the expense of private wireless users. They pledged to work with public safety radio system users, Nextel and the FCC to help to resolve cases of interference. But they want a more balanced and equitable solution that would recognize that "a wholesale disruption to 800MHz private wireless systems would threaten the U.S. economy and the protection of its workers and citizens." ■

that Nextel's plan has other flaws. For example, Nextel does not hold licenses in the 700MHz and 900MHz bands in all parts of the country, including parts of AEP's service territory. Also, where TV stations have analog-broadcasting facilities on 700MHz frequencies licensed to Nextel, those frequencies won't be unencumbered until the stations shut down those operations in favor of their new digital channels. That transition may not be completed until 2006 or later.

At 900MHz, the FCC requires operations on 12.5kHz channels, but AEP uses 25kHz channels at 800MHz. A conversion would reduce its mobile data system throughput.

Washington telecommunications attorney and *MRT* regulatory consultant Robert H. Schwaninger Jr. said that Nextel "is finessing the fact that it has failed to construct any facilities on either 700MHz or 900MHz channels" as required to maintain its license under the terms of its authorizations. "Therefore, Nextel has not 'perfected' its title to those channels, which it would use as trading stock," he said.

Those additional considerations aside, Trego said that the main point is that Nextel alone should be called on to correct the interference, not the 800MHz business and industrial/land transportation radio system users. "Any plan that would shift the burden away from Nextel would not be in the public interest and would set a dangerous precedent for the future," he said. ■

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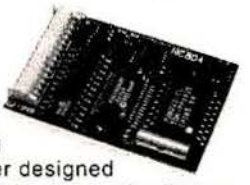

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PRYME's focus is on growing

PRYME Radio Products, located in Brea, CA, was founded in 1995 as Premier Communications Corp. Initially, the company's main focus was on replacement antennas for hand-held and mobile radios, mostly in the amateur and consumer/hobbyist radio markets.

Shortly thereafter, the company expanded its product line by adding aftermarket audio accessories, replacement battery packs and even its own line of two-way radio equipment under the ADI brand name.

In 1998 the company changed its name to PRYME Radio Products, integrating all of its previous brand names. This was done to prevent confusion and also to reflect a new focus on the land mobile, business and industrial, and public safety markets.

"It's true that we started out importing antennas from Taiwan to the United States," said Ken Collier, marketing manager of PRYME Radio Products. "However, we recognized the demand for other accessory products, and we had the engineering and factory partnerships to make them happen. Eventually, the audio accessory side of our business really took off and has become our primary focus."

Pryme's present and future

Today, PRYME has about 20 employees and an annual sales volume of about $3 million domestically. The company's main focus is now on audio accessories, including remote speaker microphones, surveillance kits and audio adapters. The company also derives a significant amount of income from aftermarket battery packs and a line of consumer (GMRS) radio equipment.

PRYME has its own manufacturing companies in Taiwan and China, as well as strategic partnerships with a number of manufacturers throughout Asia. These partnerships allow PRYME to bring competitive products to market and to quickly update designs. Asia (particularly Taiwan) is uniquely suited to provide high-tech products at reasonable cost. This has allowed PRYME to come to market with products that are innovative and affordable, fitting a unique niche in the marketplace.

Recently, PRYME has begun a relationship with Taiwanese-based battery manufacturer AXTECH Inc. that will allow the company to make a large push into the U.S. two-way radio replacement battery market. AXTECH Inc. is an international company specializing in the design and production of batteries for two-way radio communications, cellular, cordless telephones and more.

PRYME grows as an OEM

Recently PRYME has made a significant push into the OEM field, providing private labeling and custom products for several other companies in the United States and abroad. PRYME is producing products for other companies with a custom brand name on the product. These are either modified versions of PRYME products or unique custom products made specifically for the other company. PRYME has been working on OEM projects for the last year.

"We began to focus on OEM accounts at IWCE 2001," said PRYME OEM project manager Michael Houts. "We've had some success over the last year, including several large accounts. Two well-known two-way radio companies are using us to produce remote microphones for their APCO 25 portables, and we are also creating several models for another audio product company. This side of our business should continue to grow."

Pryme products

❑ The Acoustic Tube Surveillance Kits are one of the company's proudest products. This includes the current SPM-1000 model and the new SPM-2000, which will be released around the time of the International Wireless Communications Expo this year. The kits are similar to the ones produced by other manufacturers, but are even more affordable. They are modular and can be expanded from a simple "listen only" earphone kit.

PRYME offers PTT and microphone accessories that allow the kits to be used for true two-way communications. The SPM-2000 offers a few new earphone choices other than just the clear acoustic tube.

The main difference between the SPM-1000 and SPM-2000 is the duty cycle. The SPM-1000 is more of a light/medium duty audio kit. The SPM-2000 is more heavy duty, and is suitable even for the public safety market.

❑ PRYME's most unique product would be the SH-168 belt-clip system. This unit replaces the belt clip on most hand-held radios or holsters. It secures to the back of the radio with screws and strong adhesive. The SH-168 is made of polycarbonate for durability. It locks to the user's belt and the radio locks in place. The radio can only be removed by rotating it 90°.

Pryme's focus narrows

PRYME's focus is to be the premier aftermarket accessory company in the two-way industry. It is the company's goal to be the number-one industry source for audio accessories, battery packs, chargers, antennas, protective cases and any other kind of accessory that finds itself "in demand."

"At the moment we are concentrating on growing the audio line and improving our quality processes to bring ourselves in line with some of the larger manufacturers," said Collier. "Before the end of the year, we'll be making a big push with our battery packs and charger line. As we get each facet of the business established, we'll be launching the next phase."

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Belt clip locks in place

The SH-168 belt clip from **PRYME Radio Products** replaces the standard belt clip on most modern two-way radio transceivers. Unlike traditional belt clips, which can slip off a belt resulting in a damaged radio, the SH-168 locks in place and the radio can only be removed from the user's belt by rotating it 90° and lifting up. The belt clip can also be used with Velcro (not included) as a radio holder for an automobile or base station.

High-powered communications

PRYME's ClearConnect GMRS offers a range of up to 25 miles. Unlike FRS radios, which have a limited range, these radios are helpful when you need long-range personal communications. Upgrading FRS users need not worry about compatibility because channels 1–7 on the ClearConnect are the same as FRS channels 1–7, enabling the portable to intercommunicate with any FRS radios in the area.

Headset adjusts for comfort

The SPM-400A series of headsets from **PRYME** include an in-the-ear speaker and a rubber-covered earloop design that adjusts to comfortably fit either the right or left ear of any user. The entire headset/speaker assembly is made of durable polyurethane and rubber. The unit features an in-line PTT switch that can be clipped to the user's lapel or belt, or the unit can be keyed remotely using an optional remote cord.

Audio Products
for two-way radios

PRYME Radio Products™ offers a full line of audio accessories for two-way radios, including remote speaker microphones, mini-boom mics, throat mics, earphones, surveillance kits, and other types of audio accessories. We have a range of products available for light to medium duty industrial and public safety applications and models that are compatible with most major brands of portable radio, including Motorola, Kenwood, Icom, and Vertex/Standard, just to name a few. More than just offering microphones, we offer solutions for your audio needs.

Go to: pryme.com/IWCE **for more info**

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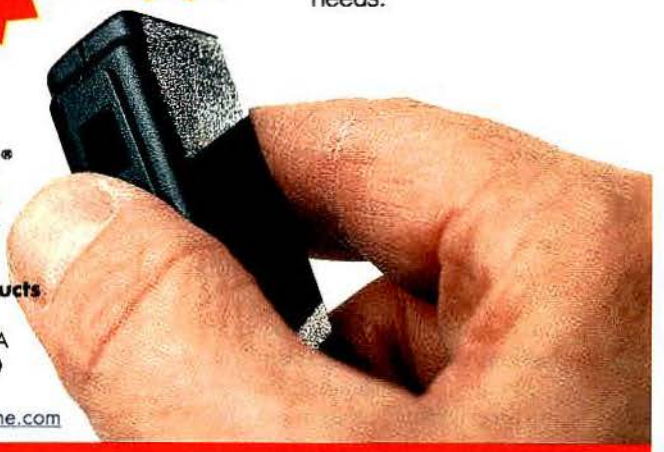

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Remote-control voice-over-Internet protocol

Replace a $100,000 switch with a $1,000 PC? It's a possibility with a remote-control VoIP that extends dispatching to PCs with wide-area computer network or dial-up access.

By Don Bishop

It's a new ball game for the Midland brand of land mobile radio products. The focus is on Midland Radio's remote-control, voice-over-Internet protocol (remote-control VoIP) product. But the Midland story demands an update.

Former Motorola executive Tony Lane, known for helping to develop Motorola's dealer program beginning with the Radius product line, heads Midland Radio, a U.S. affiliate of CTE International, Reggio Emilia, Italy. As senior vice president and chief operating officer, Lane directs Midland Radio's Consumer and Professional Divisions.

The Professional Division was created last year when Midland Radio, Kansas City, MO, bought the FM two-way radio land mobile sales and distribution business owned by Securicor Wireless. That's the same sales and distribution business once owned by Midland International and previously known as Midland LMR.

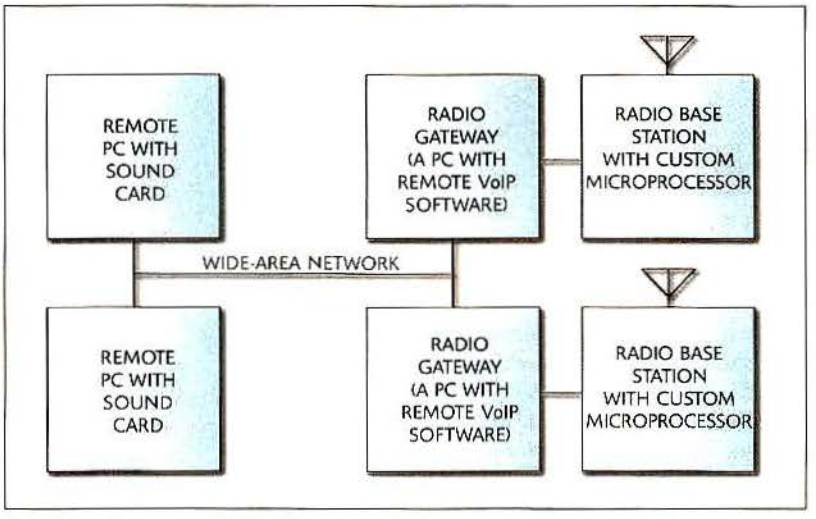
No connection exists between the old Midland International and Midland Radio, nor between Securicor Wireless and Midland Radio—except for trademark licenses from each that allow Midland Radio to use the Midland brand name for consumer and land mobile radio products. Nonetheless, many Professional Division employees have made transitions from one owner to another and have worked on the land mobile radio product line for many years.

Ownership of the land mobile radio product line has changed several times during the past 10 years, and it seems to have landed squarely in the hands of a European company with extensive mobile radio experience and business operations dating to 1973. In fact, the Professional Division called on its Eastern European affiliates for engineering services in connection with its latest U.S. radio transceiver product introductions—a step that the Professional Division's engineering director, David Kingsolver, said has reduced engineering costs to 5% to 10% of the previous typical outlay.

Meanwhile, Kingsolver and Lane expressed enthusiasm for the remote-control VoIP. For one thing, the remote-control VoIP gives users unprecedented and flexible access to a radio system backbone. Take, for example, a federal agency with repeater sites in remote areas that otherwise can be accessed only by local control stations. (A control station is a radio base station with a signal that can reach the repeater.)

The agency's wide-area computer network connects many of the offices with the control stations. But microwave or other backbone systems connect only a limited number of the repeaters with one another. When users are beyond the coverage of the backbone network available to dispatchers, they can't be called by using the control stations directly or by using traditional radio remote controls connected to the control stations.

The Professional Division developed special firmware in its base station radio's central processing unit (the CPU, or computer brain) to optimize its connection with a gateway computer. The gateway computer serves to connect the radio base station with a computer



Special software on a PC with a sound card can be used for voice access to and remote control of radio base stations through radio gateway PCs. The gateway PCs also have special software, and they connect through a custom microprocessor in the base station.

Bishop is editorial director. His email address is *dbishop@primediabusiness.com*.

wide-area network, which in turn serves as a backbone to connect any PC on the network with any selected base station with a gateway. Result: immediate connectivity among all gateway base stations.

Besides extending existing local dispatching capabilities to a new network of base stations, remote-control VoIP gives access to users who never had it before. They can use PCs to place calls with dial-up service from desktops or from laptops while on the road. They can dispatch from out-of-state offices and create zone dispatch centers.

Selective calling allows the remote-control VoIP to call an individual, distant radio unit over the WAN. Various methods can be used, including CTCSS, DCS and five-tone Selcall.

A software package has to be installed on any PC intended for use with remote-control VoIP to allow communication via IP packets directly with the gateway computer, which then converts the packets into analog voice or control signals. Off-the-shelf sound cards and digital controllers plug into the PC to allow it access to the remote radio base station over the wide-area network.

Intelligent scanning

The Professional Division's firmware optimization allows the remote PC to control as many as 64 channels over IP, together with "intelligent scanning," which stops the radio on a channel and displays the selection on the remote PC. A binary output from the radio gives the computer the channel information, and a status signal tells the PC when to read the data lines.

Kingsolver explained that if a PC is scanning several base stations and one is operating at a remote location, it helps the PC user to know which user group has been selected when the scanning stops on a channel.

He said that scanning is a common requirement that couldn't be done cleanly over tone line or dc termination connections used by traditional remote controls because it was difficult to transfer the scanning information.

"In land mobile radio, and especially in public safety radio systems, scanning with mid-tier radios is one of the biggest and toughest criteria to meet. It's common for public safety and government agencies to want fast scanning, priority sampling and sometimes dual-priority scanning," he said.

Kingsolver said remote-control VoIP has its greatest appeal to users with wide-area computer networks. He mentioned state agencies with many base stations, each with its own centralized dispatch. "We can give them the capability of anyone on the state network communicating with any one of those base stations," he said.

If disaster strikes

Moreover, if weather, fire, flood, seismic activity or violence should disable a dispatch center, any location with a PC can take over the radio communications network. "You can distribute dispatching as much as you want or need," Kingsolver said.

Kingsolver said that remote-control VoIP soon would be a large part of the land mobile radio business, and Lane added that many companies in the private sector have offices in many locations, each with on-campus radio systems that could be connected with remote-control VoIP through their existing wide-area computer networks.

"The effect upon traditional dispatch technology, whether trunked or conventional, may be substantial," Kingsolver said. "What this really allows in the networking realm is to do away with a $100,000 switch and use a $1,000 PC with appropriate software to replace the switch."

What about sales opportunities for dealers? On the one hand, they may not be selling additional two-way radio control stations onto existing systems. But Kingsolver said that the technology should stimulate sales because it "dramatically" increases the capability of two-way radio. "Customers can get wide-area coverage with a small investment in infrastructure," he said. ■

Midland Radio

Midland Radio employs about 50 people and sells its Professional Division's land mobile radio products to dealers and direct to some key customers. It also uses land mobile radio manufacturer's representatives to augment the company's regional sales managers.

Lane

The company's chief operating officer, Tony Lane, came to the company last year after 28 years with Motorola where he helped to start that company's dealer channel. It's that very channel that Lane wants to use for land mobile radio sales at Midland.

"We have been using dealers as a sounding board for product development," Lane said. "We have counseled with a number of dealers to make sure we have the right features and pricing. They're smart; they know where their market is for this product. And they are going to lead us, rather than us lead them."

Lane said that Midland's land mobile products always had a strong brand name and customer loyalty, yet the business was decimated during 10 years of ownership changes. He said that a lot of dispatch business still exists, and that the company has rededicated itself to land mobile radio.

"We must rebuild confidence in our dealer network that we can deliver a high-quality product at a good price when they need it, and that we can support them and their customers after the sale," Lane said.

Lane said that the company is looking for the best markets to serve where "we won't get trampled," referring to some large competitors. "LTR still is in big demand. There still are requests for T-band and lowband. No one is paying attention to lowband. Maybe our role is going to be areas where others are not spending lots of time and energy—and where rightly so they shouldn't."

Lane said that the company hadn't put a hard dollar market value on remote-control VoIP, but that Midland, its customers and dealers see it as "huge."

"Think about the Internet for a minute," Lane said. "There's no reason to think that the Internet won't do to the radio communications world what it's done for everyone else's world. It's the most marvelous tool." ■

220MHz: The enigma

Despite the fact that the 220MHz band had a lot of potential when it was first authorized by the FCC, 220MHz enthusiasm and technology development have waned.

By Philip Adler

The 220MHz band showed so much promise when it was first authorized by the FCC. But interest in the 220MHz band, along with a lot of other current technology, is relatively low.

Motorola has announced that it will introduce 12.5kHz-channel equipment for 220MHz use. Although that should spark interest, the company's plan is not a long-term answer. Because the band is segmented into slivers of non-contiguous, 5kHz-wide channels, Motorola's plan requires an inordinate number of *contiguous* slivers to fit its 12.5kHz-channel bandwidth requirements.

The 220MHz band offers SMR operators the opportunity to revive dependable and inexpensive dispatch service that once existed at 800MHz before Nextel.

Once enough 5kHz channels are put together (three or more), spectrum efficiency decreases more than 60%. The answer is either a consolidation of the 220MHz band or the development of a digital format, such as IDEN, that could use 5kHz-wide channels. The contiguous nationwide and E Block channels could accommodate 12.5kHz-wide signals, but, once again, with a substantial loss of efficiency. Didn't the promise of spectrum efficiency prompt the FCC to structure the band as it did?

Problems associated with using the 220MHz band have been many and varied. Two of the three initial narrowband voice equipment manufacturers—Securicor Wireless, Uniden America and SEA—have dropped 220MHz. Bizcom USA, the company that bought the rights to make SEA's former 220MHz equipment, is seeking financing to restart the manufacturing that SEA suspended for lack of funds.

Adler is the owner of PCS Communications, a radio equipment dealership and SMR operator with commercial mobile radio systems in the Philadelphia, Baltimore and Atlantic City, NJ, areas.

Survey the real customers

Neither Uniden, SEA nor Securicor Wireless understood the reality and workings of the SMR industry. All three seemed to think that they knew more of what the operators wanted than the operators themselves. Not one of the three bothered to survey their real customers, so it is little wonder that we find ourselves in the present state of affairs.

The 220MHz products continue to be merely adequate, while UHF and VHF FM product engineering benefits from what was learned at 800MHz before the arrival of Nextel.

For example, when Kenwood Communications entered the 800MHz LTR equipment race, the company's research was methodical. Kenwood representatives visited dealer after dealer in an effort to understand the needs of the SMR operators. They didn't assume that they had the answers, as they first wanted to actually hear the questions. As a result of those efforts, Kenwood developed a superior 800MHz product that has sold extremely well, and whose features are now prevalent in every trunking radio that the company makes.

The 220MHz band offers SMR operators the opportunity to revive dependable and inexpensive dispatch service that once existed at 800MHz before Nextel. A fact that seems to be overlooked by most dealers is that 220MHz operation resembles 800MHz operation in offering a valuable feature—exclusivity.

The same cannot be said of the UHF or VHF bands because there is no guarantee that an operator in those bands would not have to contend with co-channel users and the resulting interference that would surely occur eventually. Granted, there are only 2MHz of spectrum at 220MHz, but even with this bandwidth limitation, the market potential remains significant.

5kHz: A great opportunity

The manufacturer that develops a 5kHz digital product for the band would have a tremendous market position. As an operator with a considerable number of SEA 220MHz systems in place, I can speak from experience that amplitude-companded, single-sideband works, and in fact it works well. It has its peculiarities, but then again, so does everything else, including digital.

Developing digital equipment for these 5kHz channels would be a daunting task, but if a relative flyweight such as SEA could develop 5kHz equipment, certainly a super heavyweight such as a Kenwood or a Motorola should be able to do considerably better.

Imagine IDEN, or a similar digital product at 220MHz, with a feature such as the Nextel direct connect. It need not have wireless telephone capability; two-way radio dispatch is enough. Excuse my enthusiasm, but how significant would that be for an operator? Should we call it FleetLink, or perhaps NextLink?

Better yet, who cares what it is called, as long as a forward-thinking company has the good business sense to develop it? ■

years of history: *Dispatch Monthly* founder peers in the rear-view mirror

A 12-year-old boy will try to impress his friends. I tried.

My father, Capt. George Burton, was chief engineer for the Contra Costa (CA) Sheriff's Office whose 150-foot KQCE radio tower was his responsibility. The tower was alongside the city's airport, and on that Sunday morning my buddies and I were waiting to take a plane ride. They dared me to climb the tower, so I did.

Burton still has the beacon from the tower he climbed as a boy.

Our family lived on a hill above the town, and my father was looking out the window just then and saw someone on the tower. He called the dispatcher, and then drove to the waterfront himself. From 150 feet up I could hear sirens and see a bunch of red lights. I wondered where they were all going—until they pulled up at the base of the tower.

The tower eventually was moved to a new location, and eventually it became my responsibility. I had a security fence put around it to keep kids off of it. It was a sad day when they replaced the old tower. But I have the top piece with the lights from the old KCQE tower, which is all that's left. Just what everybody needs in their family room, right?

Another time, an early cable TV master antenna was being installed on a hillside above Martinez, CA. It was November 1948, and my father had built the 80-foot tower to hold the antenna. On a cold, windy day, some of his adult friends helped to pull it erect. I was assigned one of the guy wires. I may have tried to wipe my nose on a shirt sleeve, or maybe my hands were just cold. I lost my guy wire, and the tower crashed. I can't say that anyone was impressed.

My father had his own problems. The county's first mobile radios were homemade. The chassis were made from aluminum, and the best source was slot machines. My father gathered a posse of friends and raided a gambling den, seizing a quantity of the machines. They quickly drove them to the foundry and had them melted down for the aluminum, only to learn that they had raided a business owned by the sheriff's brother-in-law.

There was more. A few years later, one of the deputy sheriffs was intoxicated when he arrived for work. My father fired him. Five years later, the man was elected sheriff. The first thing he did was to fire my father. The civil service commission reversed the dismissal on appeal, but it did give my father a 30-day suspension for calling the sheriff "a no-good SOB" following the firing.

George Burton held that job for 32 years. Although I later had the same title and job, there's no way I could ever have matched his contribution to the field of communications.

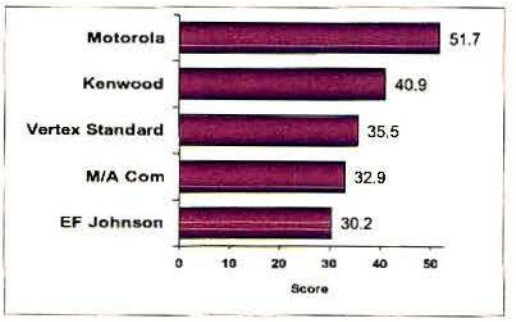
—*Alan Burton*

(Capt. Burton, an editorial advisory board member, is the founder of Dispatch Monthly *magazine. Retired from law enforcement and publishing, he has written a manuscript for a mystery titled* The Amateur Terrorist.)

Motorola tops survey results

The majority of mobile radio manufacturers in North America are being outperformed by Motorola in areas such as high product quality and technical support, according to a survey released by IMS, a specialist market research company based in the United Kingdom.

The survey results released March 27 were based on a detailed questionnaire completed by about



IMS' survey shows Motorola as the best overall manufacturer with a score of 51.7. Sample size: 187.

200 users involved in the purchase of mobile radio products. According to IMS' press release, users gave their opinions on manufacturer performance against various criteria ranging from "competitive price" to "good customer service." Respondents also identified the importance they attributed to these factors when making decisions on the purchase of mobile radio products.

The diagram (from IMS) shows an amalgamation of these results for terminal manufacturers. It was calculated by taking the weighted performance scores against each criterion for each manufacturer and adding them together to give an overall best manufacturer.

"This shows that there was a large gulf in the perceived levels of performance between Motorola and the majority of other companies. The most notable difference occurs in product quality, which users perceived to be the most important factor when selecting mobile radio products," the press release read.

E.F. Johnson project acceptance, product introductions pick up

As financial returns improve for Transcrypt International, Lincoln, NE, orders, project acceptance and new product introductions for the company's E. F. Johnson subsidiary in Waseca, MN, show a quickened pace.

2001 results — Transcrypt posted a $1.5 million profit for the fourth quarter of 2001 compared to a loss of $18.1 million for the comparable period in 2000, a loss that included $12.4 million of income tax expense. The tax resulted from an increased valuation allowance for deferred tax assets. The fourth quarter's revenue was $13.8 million, an increase of $6.6 million over the $7.3 million in revenue for the same period in 2000.

For all of 2001, Transcrypt's net income was $544,000 on $44.2 million in revenue, compared to a loss of $25.4 million on $42.2 million in revenue the previous year.

The company ended the year with cash and cash equivalents of $11.6 million and chose to pay off and terminate its line of credit on Feb. 1, 2002, leaving an unencumbered cash balance of $6.1 million.

"The increase in our revenues was primarily the result of the company focusing its efforts on the public safety sector and governmental user segment of the market, as well as improvement in and introduction of new land mobile radio products," said Michael E. Jalbert, Transcrypt's chief executive. "With continued development and introduction of new Project 25 products and infrastructure equipment in 2002 and the public sector's increasing demand for digital interoperable wireless communications solutions, we expect to see continued improvement in our financial performance in the year 2002."

Orders — Johnson has logged multiple orders for radio communications equipment placed by agencies of the Department of Interior. One order includes 5300 series mobile radios and hand-held controllers for the Bureau of Indian Affairs for use in its nationwide law enforcement activities. In additional orders placed, agencies of the Bureau of Land Management will receive digital 5300 series mobiles. Collectively, the orders are valued at $1.6 million. Jalbert said that the DOI is expected to use the radio equipment in its transition to Project 25 digital communications.

Johnson also won a contract from the school board of Virginia Beach, VA, for combination SmartNet and SmartZone 7780 series portable radios for use by the Virginia Beach City Public Schools. The radio equipment will be used in school buses supporting 84 schools in Virginia's most populous city. The contract was valued at $444,400.

Acceptance — Johnson is basking in the glow of completing an integration project involving its Multi-Net 800MHz trunked radio communications system installed in Chester County, PA. The company upgraded two existing sites to simulcast and added channels to three five-channel sites for a total of 11 channels. As the project was completed, Johnson received an order from Chester County for additional radio equipment valued at $577,000.

"This integration will make the system easier to use and will provide improvement in coverage areas throughout the county," said Ed Atkins, director of emergency services for Chester County. "The quality of support that we receive from E. F. Johnson has been a crucial factor in maximizing the efficiency of our system."

Atkins

Another plus for Johnson is the successful completion of an interoperability test on its 5300 Project 25 trunked mobile radios. Officials from the cities of Phoenix and Mesa, AZ, which are constructing a joint Project 25 trunked radio system, conducted the test to evaluate the capability of the Johnson radios to work on their soon-to-be-installed Motorola system. According to a statement from Johnson, the test result means that

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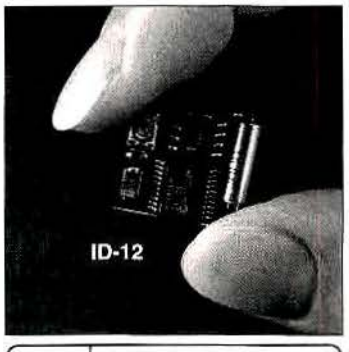

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Johnson is only the second supplier of radio equipment that operates on Project 25 trunking systems.

Multimode portable — In late February, Johnson introduced its 5100 portable radio series that supports multiple protocols, allowing numerous agencies the ability to communicate among themselves with the switch of a button.

Johnson, founded in 1923, provides wireless communications systems for public safety, commercial and government customers. It designs, manufactures, and markets conventional and trunked radio systems, land mobile radio repeaters and mobile and portable radios, including Project 25 digital radio products.

FCC adopts 800MHz NPRM

The FCC has adopted a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking to explore possible solutions to the 800MHz public safety interference problems caused by neighboring commercial providers.

In the NPRM, the FCC stated that the increasing levels of harmful interference to public safety communications in the 800MHz band must be remedied. The commission is soliciting comment on how best to do just that, while minimizing disruption to existing licensing structure. The FCC also seeks comment on a Petition for Rulemaking filed by the Personal Communications Industry Association seeking amendment of Section 90.621 of the commission's Rules. Also in the NPRM, the FCC would like comment on deals with the Balanced Budget Act of 1997. The commission would like comments on the terms and conditions of licenses in the 900MHz land mobile band if it is used to relocate displaced licensees.

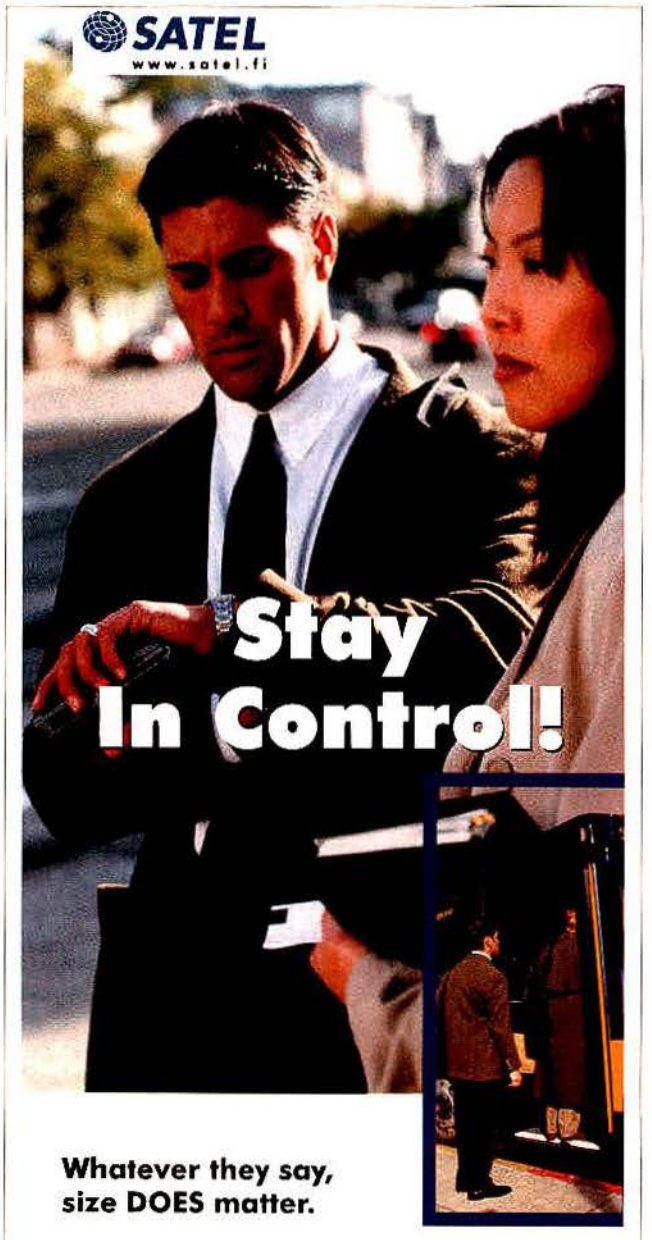
A statement from FCC Commissioner Kathleen Abernathy said she welcomes the decision to adopt the NPRM. The statement said, "Nextel deserves significant credit for coming forward with a proposal. Subsequent to Nextel's initiative, other parties have offered alternative proposals and I hope and fully expect additional ideas will be generated in response to this notice. I look forward to a vigorous and informed debate."

Abernathy also stated she is reluctant to force parties to move at their own expense and that minimizing the disruption to other bands is important.

A statement released by FCC Commissioner Michael Copps said he is also glad the commission is asking for feedback. The statement reads, "In order to do our job well we need to know how much spectrum public safety needs to protect our citizens."

Commissioner Kevin Martin's public statement said he is looking forward to working with Nextel, NAM and the public safety community to better understand and resolve the interference issues.

All the commissioners seem to agree that something must be done to stop the 800MHz interference problem, it's just a matter of what. Whether the NPRM brings about a solution or not, it's sure to spark some interesting discussions.



Whatever they say, size DOES matter.

It's sometimes hard to keep track of things. Managing large fleets scattered around a vast area can be a nightmare. Fortunately SATEL offers you an easy way to stay on top of things. With up to 40 km range and wide compatibility, a SATEL network will fulfil even the most demanding requirements.

In mobile use size does matter. SATEL is the leading manufacturer of radio modems. Our products are lightweight and compact since we value mobility in our design. They are also operator free, which means low operating costs. A network made of radio modems connected to a positioning system enables you to control your fleet precisely the way you want to.

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Email: info@satelradio.com
Sartelco USA (for CA, AZ & OR)
Phone: 1-408-973-1740
Email: Sartelco-USA@globe2.com

CIRCLE (63) ON FAST FACT CARD VISIT US AT IWCE, BOOTH #11114

Oklahoma City chooses EDACS for radio system upgrade

Oklahoma City has selected a new 800MHz M/A-Com enhanced digital access communications system to replace its replace 35 separate conventional radio channels. The new installation will support 4,500 radios on 32 trunked channels configured in two overlaid simulcast systems.

Kerry Wagnon, program director for the city's Public Safety Capital Projects Office, administers $90 million worth of improvements approved by voters that include the purchase of vehicles and other apparatus, an upgrade to computer-aided dispatching and the $24.5 million EDACS radio system. A sales tax is funding most of the radio system, with the rest paid by the city's airport, water and utility, and transportation and parking enterprises. They will share the system with other city departments and public safety agencies.

The 28-month deployment period began in January with acquisition and specification development for 11 new repeater sites that will work with a primary site on a 400-foot downtown building.

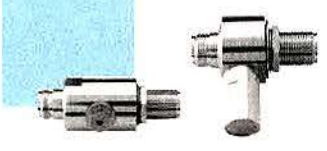
One system uses 18 trunked channels and a tower configuration that concentrates signal power overcome as much as 20dB of obstruction attenuation to penetrate buildings in densely populated areas. Wagnon said that the city preferred achieving in-building coverage with sites rather than bi-directional amplifiers in buildings.

A second, 14-channel trunked system covers the same area but emphasizes rural coverage in the 620-square-mile city. Users will roam from one system to another if coverage from their primary system otherwise would deliver an inadequate signal. Meanwhile, the dual-system configuration offers redundancy.

M/A-Com officials pointed out that together with EDACS systems operated in the state by Oklahoma Gas & Electric and American Electric Power, nearly 90% of Oklahoma would be covered by the city's and the utilities' 800MHz EDACS radio service. Extensive EDACS coverage didn't figure into the city's decision, though. Wagnon said M/A-Com won the contract because the system rated higher on the evaluation criteria with a lower cost.

Moreover, Wagnon said that the majority of the 50 agencies identified in the request for proposal for communications interoperability use VHF and UHF conventional systems. Oklahoma City's neighbors to the north (Edmond) and to the south (Norman) use 800MHz Motorola systems. Placing everyone on a new EDACS system didn't seem feasible.

RADIALL



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CIRCLE (64) ON FAST FACT CARD

ComSpace files Chapter 7 bankruptcy

ComSpace, Coppell, TX, known for its innovative digital-channel, multicarrier-architecture technology, filed for Chapter 7 bankruptcy liquidation in Dallas federal court on March 25. Along with the company's other assets, the technology will be sold by the court.

Venture investors including Sevin Rosen of Dallas and Noro-Moseley Partners of Atlanta had pumped millions of dollars into ComSpace, but by late last year, more financing was needed. An effort to secure more venture funding came close but ultimately failed, and in October, half of the company's 80 employees were laid off.

The company's president, Steven E. Fulford, told the *Dallas Business Journal* that an angel investor agreed to invest $5 million, and Fulford promptly rehired 10 employees. Before the investment could be completed, Fulford's wife, Denise, died of a heart attack, and Fulford took two weeks off. In the meantime, the investor was injured in an auto collision and died of his injuries.

"I would be surprised if the company, under some other name or some other company, is not resurrected and starts fresh," Fulford told the *Journal*.

Chuck Bolash, ComSpace's vice president of sales until the October layoff, said that he and many others were committed to the DCMA technology. "I hope someone will pick it up out of bankruptcy court and do something with it," he said.

By Dec. 1, all but 10 employees had been let go. By the end of March, with bankruptcy looming, the company had virtually ceased operations with perhaps only Fulford and the chief financial officer, David Craig, tending to the office.

The company withdrew from exhibiting at the International Wireless Communications Expo. The ComSpace Web site is dark, and the telephones were scheduled to be disconnected on April 1.

Base antenna withstands harsh conditions

Antenex's family of fiberglass-enclosed base antennas for the 2.4GHz band offers 6dBd gain and has a VSWR of <2.0:1 from 2.4GHz to 2.48GHz. The antennas can be mounted outdoors in harsh weather conditions. The FG series of antennas have the same outer shell design used in the company's lower-frequency fiberglass-enclosed base station family. A high-gloss, heavy-wall fiberglass radome, a finish ground, schedule 80, a gold anodized aluminum sleeve for mounting and a gold anodized aluminum cap complete the durable yet sleek look. On the inside, a rigid, highly consistent and low-loss PC board trace is used to construct the collinear radiator. The product also features a nickel-plated brass N female connector in the base for feedline connection.

WWW.ANTENEX.COM.

Antenna operates with integral ground plane

The ANT150F2 from **Telewave** is a compact, omnidirectional collinear antenna with an integral ground plane, which covers 148MHz–700MHz. The antenna is enclosed in a rugged structural composite radome, with a total height of only 60". The antenna's gain is 2.5dB minimum, with a nominal power rating of 500W. The vertical beamwidth is 30°, allowing RF coverage of low-lying areas such as valleys and canyons. This antenna is useful for replacement of old VHF ground-plane or "J-hook" type antennas. N female or optional 7-16 DIN female connectors are available. The ANT750F2 is a similar antenna that covers the 734MHz–806MHz range. Shadowing and multipath common in the upper UHF bands can be greatly reduced with this antenna. The model ANT750-Y5-WR is a heavy-duty directional yagi antenna that covers 734MHz–806MHz. The gain is 5dBd minimum, with a nominal power rating of 500W. The antenna is coated with Txylan material to eliminate damage from corrosion or abrasion. The active element connection and feedline are sealed inside the antenna boom.

WWW.TELEWAVE.COM

Antenna delivers high-gain performance

Corner-style antennas from **Antenna Factor** are available in models covering frequencies from 800MHz to 2.4GHz. The antennas are designed for long distance, directional communications and enhance the performance of RF links. All models feature high gain, a wide beamwidth, greater-than 70MHz bandwidth and 25dB front-to-back ratio. The antennas are constructed to withstand the stress of long-term use and are designed for 50Ω system matches with a maximum input of 100W.

WWW.ANTENNAFACTOR.COM

Antenna provides flexibility

The XtremeWave MSO24014PTNF all-terrain sectorized omnidirectional antenna from **Maxrad** is designed to provide pattern shaping flexibility to wireless Internet network planners by applying electrical and mechanical technology to a single antenna model. This antenna allows individual sector adjustments of as much as 15° of uptilt or downtilt, permitting system planners to contour their coverage area according to the geographic conditions of the territory. For applications with specific coverage demands, the antenna offers more than 10 azimuth pattern options, optimized to address varying coverage, cost control and tower space limitations.

WWW.MAXRAD.COM

Omni-directional antenna for 5GHz

Mobile Mark's omnidirectional site antennas for 5.2GHz and 5.8GHz are available in 6dBi and 9dBi gain configurations. These high-frequency antennas are designed for new microwave systems, including UNII networking. The design accommodates high-speed wideband performance. The antennas provide a uniform omni pattern and are enclosed in a black polycarbonate radome that measures 18" long and 1" wide. The antenna terminates with a female N connector and comes with all hardware needed to mount it to a pole, ceiling or surface/offset mount.

WWW.MOBILEMARK.COM

FROM ONE EXTREME

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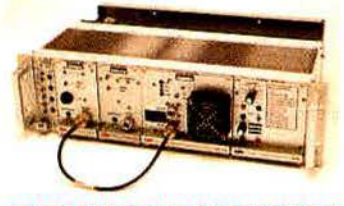

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Antennas combine with subscriber units

Radiall/Larsen Antenna Technologies' line of base station antennas, when combined with existing subscriber unit antennas, are useful for complete broadband wireless needs. The product line includes systems at ISM 2.4GHz and 5.8GHz and UNII 5.2GHz–5.8GHz bands. The product types include solid parabolics, grid parabolics, field adjustable sectors, fixed sectors and one new yagi.

WWW.RADIALLLARSEN.COM

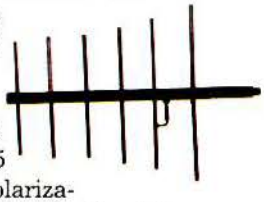
Base station antenna features adjustable tilt

The Optimizer Plus AXE199014 adjustable downtilt antenna from **Radio Frequency Systems** features polarization diversity in addition to the continuously adjustable dial-turn electrical tilt process. The adjustable electrical tilt provides the system operator flexibility for any time a new value of electrical tilt is required. The operator simply turns the dial on the back of the antenna. Polarization diversity is suited to dense urban areas. This type of antenna can result in lower site costs. Fewer antennas are required to cover a given area, which simplifies mounting and allows the use of towers without platforms. This model is used by PCS systems operators in the 1,850MHz–1,990MHz band.

WWW.RFSWORLD.COM

High-gain yagi supports SCADA, RPU apps

The SAM-460 from **Samco Antennas** is a small, lightweight antenna built for the 400MHz–512MHz range. It is designed for use in a variety of situations, including SCADA and RPU applications. This antenna is hand-tuned for optimum performance in the field. It is suited for permanent applications where stealth is a factor. Features include a forward gain of 10dB, impedance of 50Ω, type N female termination and a VSWR of 1.5 to 1 or less. Polarization is vertical or horizontal.



WWW.SAMCOANTENNAS.COM

Antennas collocate multiple services

The dual-frequency, dual-polar base station antennas from **Alan Dick & Company** cover the 824MHz–894MHz and 1,850MHz–1,990MHz frequencies simultaneously. The DGX-CS65-13-0/0, DFX-CS65-13/6-0/0 and the DFX-CS65-32/18-0/0 models are useful for collocating multiple wireless services in one antenna. This allows the user to upgrade the network without adding cost. The polarization is ±45° slant, cross. The gain for these models is between 11dBi and 15dBi, with between 15.5dBi and 17dBi for the 13-0/0 model. The electrical tilt for these antennas is 0°.

WWW.ALANDICK.COM

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Product Encore

Safe batteries fit Ericsson, Motorola radios

Rechargeable replacement batteries for the Ericsson/GE LPE series, Motorola HT750/1250, GP350, P1225, Visar and XTS-3000 radios are available from **Multiplier Industries**. The batteries are intrinsically safe and non-incendive. They are approved by Factory Mutual Research in meeting the same standards as the OEM. The M191203/2 for Ericsson/GE LPE series radios is a NiCd, 7.5V battery and offers 1,200mAh capacity. The M9010 for the Motorola HT series of radios is a NiMH, 7.5V battery that offers 1,600mAh capacity. For Motorola Visar radios, the M7397 is a NiMH battery with 7.5V and 1,500mAh capacity. All batteries are designed for the exact fit to the radio and charger. Multiplier's Sure-grip surface is also available.

WWW.MULTIPLIER.COM

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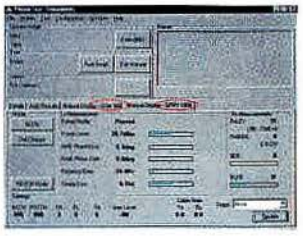
Switch links as many as 32 sites

The ST-510 network switch from **SmarTrunk** systems provides multisite, wide-area roaming capability for any SmarTrunk II system. Now system operators can link as many as 32 sites into a single, integrated communications network. In addition to wide-area coverage, subscribers can have a host of advanced features such as voice prompts, digital voice mail and call forwarding.

WWW.SMARTRUNK.COM

Test system supports GPRS apps



The General Packet Radio Service handset from **IFR Systems** offers testing capabilities for repair centers that service and maintain GPRS mobile handsets. Designed for service operations, the 2935 radio test system offers service organizations a convenient way to upgrade their workshop's testing capability. The handset, which includes the GPRS firmware option coupled with Phonetest management software, provides the necessary signaling, test and analysis capabilities to quickly characterize transmitter and receiver performance.

WWW.IFRSYS.COM

Chargers operate as conditioners

The LAA0344 and LAA0345 conditioning battery chargers from **Relm Wireless** are compatible with all BK Radio rechargeable battery packs. Both chargers operate as standard chargers or as battery conditioners. These chargers accommodate NiCd and NiMH batteries. When operating in the conditioner mode, the charger runs the battery through a drain and charge cycle. By doing this, memory effect is reduced, resulting in a longer life for the battery.

WWW.RELM.COM

Receiver maintains LANs

Berkeley Varitronics Systems' Beetle hand-held wireless receiver is for installing and maintaining LANs. The instrument measures the coverage of direct-sequence CDMA IEEE 802.11b networks. The receiver measures and displays signal strength of all access points on all 14 DSSS channels, as well as packet-error rates and WEP encryption detection. It detects and differentiates from narrowband interferences such as microwave ovens and frequency hopping systems.

WWW.BVSYSTEMS.COM

Headset offers 'wrap around' feature

Eartec's Monarch lightweight headset is built to withstand tough conditions. The headset features a flexible backband molded with PBT, a polymer developed for manufacturing automobile bumpers. The "wrap-around" design offers a low-fatigue, comfortable fit even when worn with safety helmets. The headset includes an inline PTT assembly rated for 10,000 operations and a connector for a portable transceiver.

WWW.EARTEC.COM

Encryption scramblers support Vertex radios

Midian Electronics' plug-in encryption scramblers are for the Vertex VS 210A/400/600/800/900 portable radios. The scramblers available include the TVS-2 VX, high-security rolling code scrambler and the VPU-15 VX speech inversion scrambler. The TVS-2 scrambler offers frequency hopping and random dwell as security measures. The scramblers use proprietary Kryptic signaling, which allows for ANI, selective calling, deadbeat disable and over-the-air programming of security code when using CAD-300.

WWW.MIDIANS.COM

Radio allows one-to-one communications

Motorola's XTN series of professional two-way radios can meet today's onsite business communications needs. The lightweight XTN series allows one-to-one or group communications at the push of a button so users can track projects more efficiently and keep up with their workforce. There are no phone numbers to dial, no monthly fees or service contracts to sign. Little training is needed for team members to get fully up-to-speed.

WWW.MOTOROLA.COM

Isolator separates phone line, equipment

The OC-100/200 from **Hark Tower Systems** optical telephone line isolator isolates equipment from the telephone line. This is accomplished by using fiber optic technology, converting electrical signals into light, passing this light information through a 4" fiber gap and then reconstructing the light levels back into electrical signals. This allows the equipment to communicate with the telephone line without being connected to it. This isolator also regulates the current through your equipment. It provides a safe level of current flow through the equipment regardless of the current on the telephone line. There is no need to buy a current regulation device.

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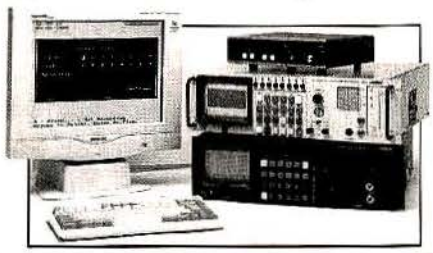

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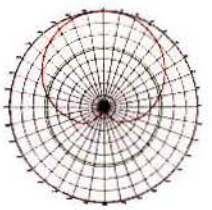
WWW.TRU-CON.COM

Antenna created for low tower load



Designed for 65° sector plans, the dBDirector ZoneMaster series of antennas from **Decibel Products** features an azimuth pattern in a slim package created for low tower load and easy zoning approval. This azimuth pattern shaping affects the level of sector-to-sector overlap, and enhanced control in this plane provides an additional level of improvement in network performance.

WWW.DECIBELPRODUCTS.COM

Dispatch software works with voice-over-IP

InfoLink from **Catalyst Communications Technologies** allows dispatch operators using any of Catalyst's dispatch software products to automatically open files and applications that are closely associated with the dispatch operations. Because the dispatch software runs on standard Windows-based PC platforms, thousands of applications and file-oriented tools can now be used on the same desktop monitor that presents the dispatch application. The system addition enhances the company's existing software for voice-over-IP, wide-area dispatch.

WWW.CATCOMTEC.COM

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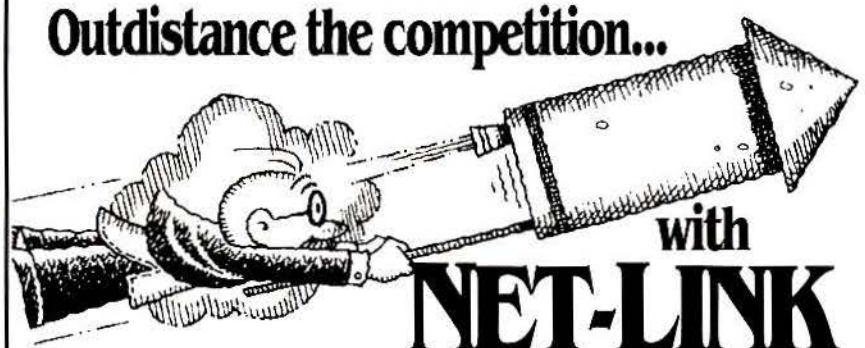

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Transceiver offers 160-plus channels

Vertex Standard's VXA-150 Pro V Air band transceiver offers a full 5W P.E.P. of transmit output power for reliability. The transceiver is rugged and water-resistant. It offers 160 channels, including all 10 NOAA weather broadcast frequencies, 50 MR channels and 100 book channels. An eight-character alphanumeric, invertible LCD on top of the unit provides an indication of either the frequency, the channel number or an alphanumeric label. The transceiver also allows the user to directly enter the frequency from the 16-button backlit keypad. This reduces the need to store frequencies into memory before operating on them.

WWW.VXSTD.COM

Telemetry antenna challenges vandalism

Maxrad has developed an antenna for wireless telemetry and meter reading applications often plagued by theft and vandalism. The MTO8903PT ultra-thin antenna provides discrete omnidirectional coverage of frequencies ranging from 896MHz–941MHz with 2.5dBi gain and a 3dB vertical beamwidth of 35°. Measuring 3" in diameter by 0.25" deep, and weighing four ounces, this ground-plane-dependent antenna can be discreetly installed on any flat metal surface including vending machines, utility meter boxes or any other telemetry location. The antenna includes six feet of RG58/U cable that can be fitted with many types of connectors. It is secured to the metal surface with a double-sided, high-bond tape for permanent indoor or outdoor use.

WWW.MAXRAD.COM

Antenna analyzer offers new configuration

Anritsu's Site Master analyzers are designed with a new configuration that makes it easier to detect cable feedline and antenna system problems before they become system failures. The models are equipped with cable-specific folders with the characteristics of the cables and all appropriate testing parameters programmed in the folders. This eliminates setup error and ensures sweep accuracy. Features include a multilingual user interface, high immunity to ambient RF levels, 517 data points that enable identification of faults, and a full range of marker and limit functions. The light, small analyzers fit in a backpack.

WWW.US.ANRITSU.COM

Software suits small police departments

The public safety dispatch software from **DataTrax 2000** is designed for small- and medium-sized police departments. It was developed using Microsoft Access 2000 and Visual Basic. A high-end server solution like Oracle or Microsoft SQL server is not required, saving the agency money.

WWW.DATATRAX2000.COM

System coordinates test equipment

Amplifier Research's Brainlink system controllers connect and coordinate multiple pieces of RF test equipment. Multiple amplifiers, antennas, signal generators, directional couplers and spectrum analyzers or receivers can now be linked in a coordinated system. This system enables a range of emissions and susceptibility tests to be conducted without manually changing cable feeds or equipment settings. Because the system automatically routes signals to and from the appropriate test equipment, a user can now conduct a series of tests from start to finish with a push of the button.

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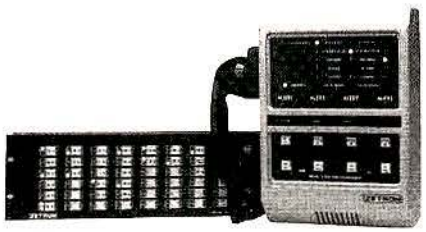
The VigilCom remote spectrum analyzer from **Morrow Technologies** offers a focused bandwidth design that reduces cost and size, enabling it to be installed anywhere. The frequency range of the first model, the VC70, is 60MHz to 80MHz. It is useful for monitoring the baseband RF performance of all the sites. The analyzer is a compact 8.5" × 9.85" × 1.625" and weighs less than five pounds. Simply install the analyzer at each of the sites, then operate it remotely from any location in the world via LAN, modem or the Internet.

WWW.MORROWCORP.COM

Dispatch system supports fire stations



Zetron's model 6/26 fire station alerting system comprises two main components: the Model 6 fire station transponder and the Model 26 status/control panel. The Model 6 resides in the fire station and provides an audio interface to the station's PA system, a data interface to the station printer and visual status indicators. The Model 26 resides in the dispatch center and provides buttons for dispatching, indicators to present status and a computer interface for automated dispatching. At the dispatch center, alerts are initiated with a single key press on the Model 26 or via command from a CAD host. The resultant data packet signaling the alert is transmitted to the designated fire station Model 6 in less than 1/10 of a second. On receipt, the alert is automatically acknowledged.

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Notebook operates at 800MHz

AMREL has integrated an Intel Pentium III 800MHz CPU into a rugged mobile computing system. The CPU is an optional feature available with all Rocky models including: Rocky Unlimited rugged notebook, Rocky Mobile in-vehicle computing station, Rocky Matrix all-in-one notebook and in-vehicle computing station, as well as the Rocky Patriot line of military and government computer products and the Rocky CraftPro line of telecommunications computer products.

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Chalup

Changes at Sabre Communications, Sioux City, IA:

Jerry Chalup joins as national components sales manager for the Site Solutions division. **Grant Gieselman** is appointed to the position of purchasing manager. **Dan Verbeski** advances to the position of shipping manager.

Gieselman

John Sweeney departs Motorola as vice president of Asia and North America IDEN infrastructure to join Kaval Wireless Technologies, Markham, Ontario, as president of its U.S. operations.

The Cellular Telecommunications & Internet Association, Washington, appoints **Don Listwin**, president of Openwave Systems, Washington, to its board of directors.

Changes at Motorola, Schaumburg, IL:

Janilee Johnson, corporate vice president, advances to chief communications officer. **David Devonshire,** former chief financial officer of Ingersoll-Rand and Owens-Corning, joins as chief financial officer. **Edward D. Breen** head of the Networks sector, advances to president and is elected to the board of directors.

Thomas J. Starr, co-founder of the Kelso Starrs and Associates LLC consulting firm, joins Schott Applied Power, Rocklin, CA, as president.

Adel Faddah, consultant for JPS Communications, Raleigh, NC, advances to director of sales, Middle East.

Del King, E9-1-1 systems director for Greenville County, SC, for HTE, Lake Mary, FL, is promoted to vice president, public safety and justice systems with product management responsibility for more than 20 law enforcement, fire, EMS and justice products.

Tony Lane joins Midland Radio, Kansas City, MO, as senior vice president of its land mobile radio division, after spending 28 years at Motorola.

Richard A. Edwards leaves the Personal Communications Industry Association as production operations manager for frequency coordination to join Rockville, MD-based Shulman, Rogers, Gandal, Pordy & Ecker, P.A. as a part of the firm's expansion of its FCC application preparation services.

Ron Spencer, national sales manager for the receiver division at ICOM America, Bellevue, WA, advances to the position of national sales manager in the Land Mobile division.

Pack Your Suitcase

April.

23–24: British Association of Public-Safety Communications Officers, organized by Brintex, Novotel London West Convention Center, Hammersmith, London. **www.bapco.co.uk.**

24–26: International Wireless Communications Expo, co-sponsored by *Mobile Radio Technology*, Las Vegas Convention Center, Las Vegas. **www.iwceexpo.com**.

25: Simulcast Forum, Simulcast Solutions, Las Vegas Convention Center, 8 a.m., East lobby, S2, Las Vegas. **www.simulcastsolutions.com.**

28–5/1: APCO North Central Regional Conference, sponsored by the Wisconsin Chapter of APCO, Madison, WI. **www.apco2002.com**.

May

6–10: Vehicular Technology Spring Conference, sponsored by IEEE, Birmingham-Jefferson Civic Center, Birmingham, AL. **www.ieee.org**.

14: Region 13 Quarterly NPSPAC meeting, 10 a..m., South Jacksonville Police Department, South Jacksonville, IL. Contact: George Sneyd at 217-558-6444 or *sneydge@isp.state.il.us*.

15–17: 5th Annual PCIA Tower and Site Management Forum, sponsored by the Personal Communications Industry Association, Westin Diplomat Resort & Spa, Hollywood, FL. Contact: Poppie Bergere at 800-759-0300 ext. 7433 or **www.pcia.com.**

20–23: ASCENT Spring Conference, sponsored by the Association of Communications Enterprises, Paris Las Vegas Hotel, Las Vegas. **www.ascent.org.**

June

2–6: Supercomm, sponsored by TIA and USTA, Georgia World Congress Center, Atlanta. **www.supercomm2002.org.**

10–11: AMTA's 17th Annual Leadership Conference, Hyatt Regency Crystal City, Arlington, VA. **www.amtausa.org.**

16–20: NENA, sponsored by National Emergency Number Association, Indianapolis. **www.nena9-1-1.org.**

23–26: UTC Telecom, sponsored by the United Telecom Council, MGM Grand, Las Vegas. **www.utc.org.**

25–26: 16th Annual Police Security Expo, Atlantic City Convention Center, Atlantic City, NJ. **www.police-security.com.**

July

14–17: Forestry Conservation Communications Association National Conference, Radisson's Fort Magruger Hotel and Conference Center, Williamsburg, VA. **www.fcca.info.**

August

11–15: APCO Conference & Exposition, sponsored by the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials–International, Opryland Hotel, Nashville, TN. **www.apcointl.org.**

September

17–20: PCIA GlobalXChange, sponsored by the Personal Communications Industry Association, Ernest Morial Convention Center, New Orleans. **www.pcia.com.**

October

5–9: 109th Annual IACP Conference: Law Enforcement Education Technical Exposition, Minneapolis. **www.theiacp.org.**

7–9: AMTEX 2002, Westin Fort Lauderdale hotel, Fort Lauderdale, FL. **www.amtausa.org**.

November

6–9: Private Wireless Summit, sponsored by the Industrial Telecommunications Association, Marriott Wardman Park Hotel, Washington. 703-528-5115 or **www.ita-relay.com** .

22: Radio Club of America Annual Awards Banquet and Technical Symposium, New York Athletic Club, New York. **www.radio-club-of-america.org.**

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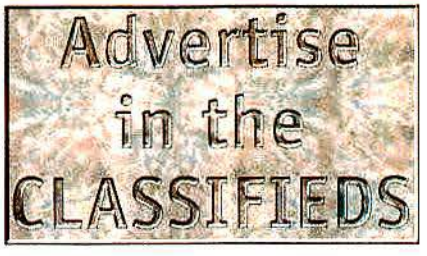

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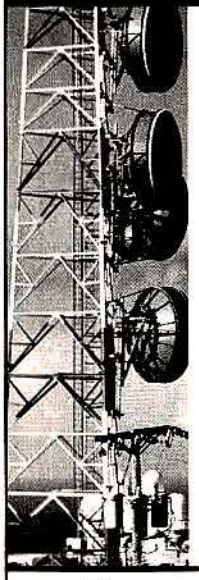

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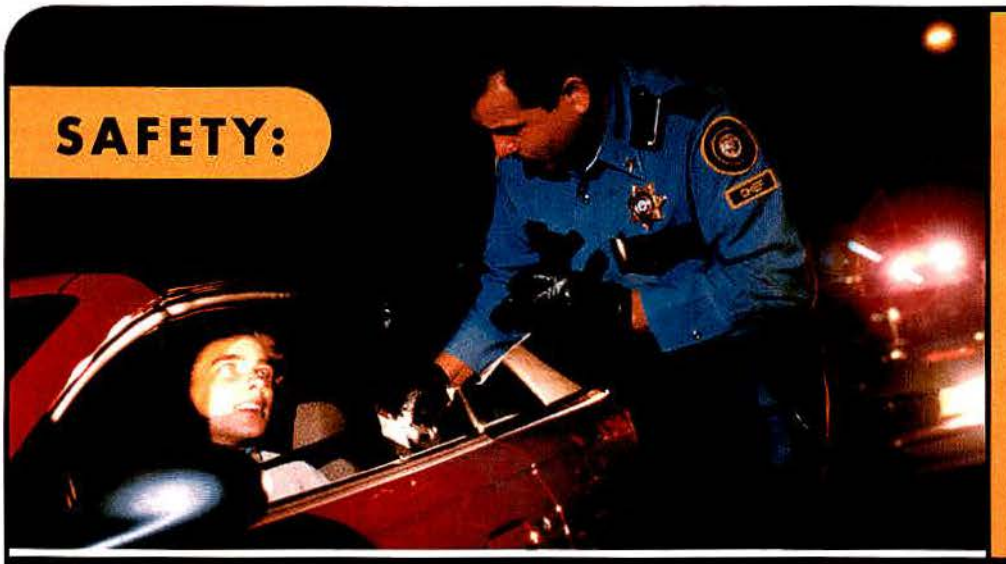

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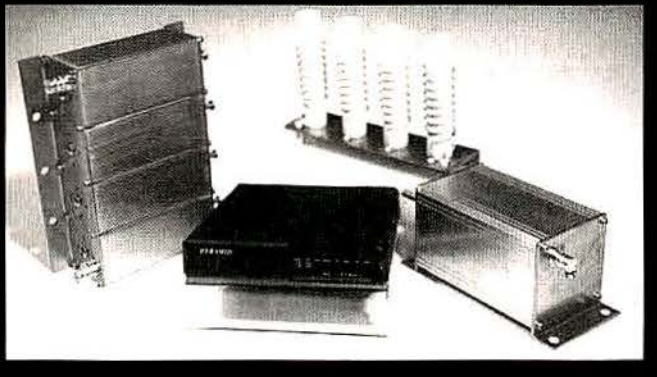

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CIRCLE (109) ON FAST FACT CARD

Disrespect of amateur radio on Sept. 11

As I've noted previously, I am a history buff. If history teaches anything, it is that we must learn from our mistakes, or we are destined to repeat them. I know this firsthand.

Do you recall the tragedy that was the Iranian revolution of 1979?

I remember Nov. 4, 1979. That day, Iranian students seized the American Embassy in Tehran and held 52 Americans hostage. It was the day I knew my world was going to get a lot more interesting. I was a flight line maintenance officer with an air rescue unit and was one of the first aircraft maintenance officers on two advanced special-forces helicopters—the only two in the Air Force inventory.

One rescue attempt ended up as a tragedy itself. "Eagle Claw" was plagued by failures. The chief failure was what I call the "chaos of command." From mission planning to mission departure, the "on-the-fly" approach to the mission contributed to the ground disaster that was Desert One. This is not to take anything away from the men of the Air Force, Navy and Marines who participated. They were faced with a task I believe they were not prepared to do, and they did the best job they could.

But what many do not realize is that there was to be a second attempt that included our special ops helos. I saw this event firsthand. Did we learn from Eagle Claw? No. We faced the same command chaos. "Honey Badger" (the code name for the rescue effort) never went. The American government traded Iranian assets for the release of the hostages, and the mission was canceled.

In the postmortem of Honey Badger, did we learn from the command chaos? Yes. Did we take the appropriate action? Supposedly. Did we have problems in future actions? Yes.

Chaos of command

I was reminded of Eagle Claw and Honey Badger as I researched the actions of the amateur radio operators during the events of Sept. 11. During my interviews with Charles Hargrove (N2NOV), the ARRL NYC district emergency coordinator who supported the New York World Trade Center efforts, and Tom Gregory (N4NW), the ARRL Virginia section emergency coordinator supporting the Pentagon, I flashed back to 1979.

Both men, and the volunteers who worked with them, faced many obstacles in bringing badly needed communications capability to the rescue efforts at the WTC and the Pentagon. Among them was the same obstacle we faced during the Iranian hostage situation: the chaos of command.

Was this to be expected given the nature of the attacks? Of course. Who could prepare for something like Sept. 11? But, in listening to them describe the reaction of the "command" authorities to the ARRL volunteers, it appears to me the Office of Emergency Management in New York and the Washington police authority have little respect for amateur radio emergency service volunteers.

Hunting the OEM

In New York, the problem was the OEM. When ARRL volunteers were ready to respond to support the OEM, they had to find it first. (The OEM was forced out of its location at 7 WTC.) On two occasions, Hargrove had to *hunt* it down. When Hargrove located it, he was able to determine that it needed phone lines. He was able to work the with the telephone company and obtain the lines. Logic dictates that, had the OEM understood the need for the amateur radio capability to begin with, time would have been saved. Communications could have been improved, and who knows what could have been accomplished had that communications been available sooner?

Security issues at the Pentagon

While Hargrove was facing command and control issues in New York, Gregory found security at the Pentagon to be a real obstacle. He noted that, initially, security was confused. At first, he *was* able to obtain ID badges for his people from military security. Within a few days, though, as more volunteers arrived to relieve the first ones, Gregory was faced with getting ID cards for his volunteers from civilian law enforcement—which had placed a limit on the number of cards issued. The ARRL volunteers eventually had to go through the American Red Cross and Salvation Army to obtain the cards. Both organizations themselves were also restricted to the number they could get. This put both organizations in a bind.

Lessons from Sept. 11

Are these new problems for ARRL volunteers? To the degree that they happened I would say yes. But, the fact they happened, at all tells me that New York and Washington officials need to analyze how important amateur radio is to them during disasters and need to involve ARRL in preparations. But, will they? History tells me they won't. My gut feel is *they better*. And not just in Washington and New York, but in every city in America. The war is raging, and we cannot be so foolhardy as to believe it will not be brought to our shores another time. Again, amateur radio volunteers will have to fight an uphill battle. It's maddening.

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Digital Coded Squelch Encoder-Decoder
Jumper Programmable to all 106 DCS codes.
1.36" x 1.18" x 0.25"
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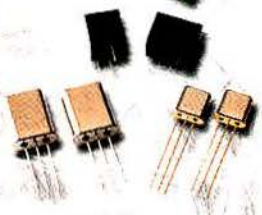

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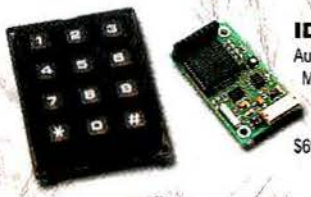

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Automatic Morse Station Identifier
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Fully field programmable with included keypad.
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PE-1000
Desktop Paging Encoder
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Other formats and custom tones available.
7.5" x 7.8" x 2.7"
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CTCSS Encoder
Microminiature, DIP switch programmable.
Includes 64 tones from 33.0 to 254.1 Hz.
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TE-32
Multi-tone CTCSS Encoder
Rotary dial switchable to any of the standard 32 EIA tones.
5.25" x 3.3" x 1.7"
$49.94
TE-32D with LED display, $99.95

TP-3200
Shared Repeater Tone Panel
Full featured and with all 157 CTCSS/DCS codes.
Desktop and rack mounted versions.
$279.95

TS-64
CTCSS Encoder-Decoder
Microminiature jumper programmable.
Includes 64 tones from 33.0 to 254.1 Hz.
0.78" x 1.70" x 0.25"
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PC programmable with optional kit.
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Encodes Two-Tone Sequential, Burst Tone, or DTMF ANI/ENI Formats.
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Multi Output DTMF Decoder
Decodes address codes of 1 to 7 digits from all 16 DTMF characters.
Multiple outputs and remote reset capability.
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Use with ST-804A or other DTMF ANI encoders for monitoring of fleet radio users and control systems.
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